

The difference we make

Our impact in 2017/18



**Nottingham
& District**

We are Citizens Advice Nottingham & District

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

We're here for everyone and help with problems like managing debt or household bills, understanding rights at work or housing issues. We provide specialist services in debt, housing and people affected by Multiple Sclerosis.

We're an important part of this community, with **7** locations where people can come for help.

Through our daily interaction with clients we have a credible understanding of local needs. We use our data and insight to tailor our services, as well as help improve policies and practices locally.

We put our clients' needs at the heart of our decision-making.

We're also part of the national Citizens Advice service. This means we share knowledge and best practice so that people can expect a quality service. Together we work to fix the underlying causes of people's problems using evidence gathered from across our network.

Because of this we save society money. In 2017/18 for every **£1** invested in our service, we saved government and public services **£3.71**.

This is the story of our impact.

This is Nina

Nina is an example of one of the people Citizens Advice helped in 2017/18.

Her story shows how we help people solve their problems and the impact this has on their lives and wider society.

You can follow **Nina's story** through this report.



We helped Nina solve her problem as

What we did

We supported people with lots of different types of problems. **31%** of the clients we advised had a problem relating to benefits, **33%** wanted help with managing their debts, and **19%** had a problem with their housing.



31,212 issues dealt with

Like Nina, sometimes people have more than one issue they need help with.



Nina was struggling with her housing situation. She was behind in paying her rent.

The threat of being evicted was making her feel very anxious.

The strain was also aggravating an existing long-term health condition, making it harder to manage.

She couldn't solve the problem alone and needed help.

How we did it

People accessed our service in different ways.



78% of the **8,951** local people we advised last year had at least one face-to-face contact with us

To enable us to help our clients, there were:

15,169 face-to-face contacts

13,273 telephone calls made or received

15,017 letters/emails sent or received



Nina found advice on our website and contacted her local Citizens Advice to make an appointment.

Jack, a volunteer adviser, helped Nina work through her problem. He asked what the problem was, what had caused it and how it was affecting her.

He found out that Nina had recently experienced a change in her employment situation. This was putting additional pressure on her finances, which was why she was getting behind with her rent.

we help thousands of others

How we helped

Our advice enabled thousands of people like Nina to overcome their problems.



7 in 10 of our clients were helped to solve their problem

Problems don't happen in isolation, and can have a severe effect on people's lives. Solving them stops these situations escalating.



Jack helped Nina write a letter to her landlord and set up a payment plan. This stopped her landlord trying to evict her.

Together, they worked out a budget to help Nina with other debts and maximise her income.

Jack found out Nina was on a flexible hours contract, so he helped her better understand her rights at work.

What this means

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



4 in 5 people said our advice improved their life, including improving their health and financial situation

Other benefits include:

- **3 in 5** people we advised found it easier to manage day to day
- Nearly **1 in 2** felt they had better relationships with other people
- **2 in 5** had a more secure housing situation
- **3 in 10** found it easier to work or find a job



Following our advice, Nina was able to get back to normal and her quality of life improved.

Her housing situation was now much more secure—and she felt less anxious as a result.

She also had greater control of her finances and a manageable budget.

How our advice changes lives

We do more than fix immediate problems. Our advice makes a significant long-term difference to the people we help.



4 in 5 people said our advice improved their life

Our advice can improve people's health

Having a problem can adversely affect someone's mental or physical health. Our advice helps. **70%** of the people we helped said they felt less stressed and **46%** said their physical health improved. This is also true for people with existing health conditions who require additional support from health services as a result of their problem. **57%** said they were better able to manage their condition after coming to us.

Our advice makes a difference to people's finances

We support thousands of people each year to manage their money better. We provide advice on debt, benefits and housing issues, as well as helping people with their budgeting skills.

As the people we help are more likely to struggle financially than on average, this can make a vital difference when money is tight. Nearly **1 in 2** people say that they had more money or control over their finances after advice.

Our advice can make people more resilient

3 in 5 people said they had low confidence about taking action to solve their problems before advice.

After advice, **2 in 3** felt more confident to handle a similar problem in future and **3 in 4** felt more knowledgeable regarding their rights. We responded to people's needs and increased their ability to solve their own problems in future.

Outcomes and Impact Research (2017)



Having problems with her housing and finances meant Nina had found managing everyday much harder. With these problems resolved, her physical health improved and she didn't need additional health services. Thanks to Jack's support she left with more knowledge and confidence to solve similar problems in the future.

Why we're needed

Problems have a severe impact on people's lives. They need our help to solve them.



77% of the people we helped said they would not have been able to solve their problem without our support

Problems can make everyday life harder

4 in 5 people we helped had experienced a big life change before coming to us—with nearly half reporting a change in their health situation. **9 in 10** people said their problem affected their lives, including causing financial difficulty and making managing day to day harder.

Knowing how to take action isn't always obvious

More than **2 in 3** people said they had difficulty knowing who to contact or how systems work. This was particularly important as **1 in 3** people turned to us when they had to take action urgently.

Solving your problem can also be about having the right skills

Nearly **1 in 2** people we helped weren't confident about taking action on their money matters.¹ Nearly **1 in 3** people reported needing help to use online services, forms and tools.

If left unresolved, these problems don't just affect the individual—they impact on their community. Solving these problems also adds considerable value to society.²

Outcomes and Impact Research (2017)

¹ Understanding money skills

² Modelling the value of the Citizens Advice service



When Nina sought advice she urgently needed our help to avoid eviction. The effect of one problem had caused another. She didn't feel in control of her circumstances and this made it harder to think clearly or feel confident about what to do. That's why she turned to us.

This is Jack



Jack is an example of one of our **65** trained volunteers.

People like Jack give their time, skills and experience to benefit the people who come to us for help.

During 2017/18 our volunteers donated nearly **12,000 hours** to help deliver our services, amounting to a contribution of almost **£210,000** worth of volunteering hours.

In order to deliver a high-quality service for our clients, we continually invest in volunteers' recruitment, development and management. By ensuring we have supportive and constructive environments, enables a range of people with different skills and backgrounds to volunteer.

We couldn't help as many people as we do without our amazing volunteers.

The wider value of volunteering

Volunteering also brings savings to public services.

Volunteering improves skills, resilience, health and wellbeing, while strengthening community engagement.

By training and investing in our volunteers, we help to develop individuals' personal abilities, and the way that they feel about themselves, their skills and their community. This can have a significant impact through:

- gaining practical skills.
- increasing employability.
- increasing sense of purpose or self-esteem.
- having a positive effect on health.
- feeling more engaged with the local community.

Typically

- **80%** of unemployed volunteers believe they are overcoming barriers to employment.
- **54%** of employed volunteers use volunteering to change or evaluate their career.
- **35%** of volunteers who leave volunteering go into education, employment or training.

This is an additional benefit to society through the way we deliver our services.



Making a difference to people like Nina was why Jack wanted to volunteer in the first place. He wanted to use his skills and experience from his working life to help people with their problems.

Volunteering at his local Citizens Advice means Jack has a better understanding of the issues in his community. He also finds volunteering and the training he received from Citizens Advice has helped him develop in his career.

Our value

Helping stop problems occurring or escalating reduces the need for public services which generates savings to the public purse.

For example:

- Helping clients negotiate local processes, such as welfare reform changes.
- Helping local authority rent and council tax arrears to be rescheduled reduces the local authority's associated administrative costs.
- Ensuring local people can get on with their lives, by helping them maximise available income, prevents more critical and costly intervention by the state.

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

In 2017/18, every **£1** invested in our service generated savings of **£3.71** to government and public services.

Solving people's problems improves their lives—and this means better wellbeing, participation and productivity.

In 2017/18 we helped our clients manage **£16.6m** debt.

In 2017/18, as a result of our advice, our clients were almost **£2.7m** better off. This was achieved through debts being written-off, taking up benefits and resolving housing and consumer problems.

In 2017/18, every **£1** invested in our service generated at least **£9.57** for local people.



Stopping Nina from being evicted, and improving her mental and physical health, meant she didn't need extra support from public services. She also felt her wellbeing improved—and she had extra money in her pocket to help with everyday costs.

Our funders

Citizens Advice Nottingham & District has a range of contracts, service level agreements, grants and donations and is funded by:

Nottingham City Council
Nottinghamshire County Council
Gedling Borough Council
Rushcliffe Borough Council
Money Advice Service
Capital One
MS Society

We also receive donations from local companies and private individuals.

We are thankful for the financial help we receive from all who support us. It enables us to develop innovative projects that make a difference to the community. We always welcome new partners who can help us to build on our work.

Our partners

Advice Nottingham is a consortium of advice organisations established to strengthen the not-for-profit advice sector in Nottingham City.

We hold the contract with Nottingham City Council for the provision of community based and citywide advice services.

Work is sub-contracted to our partners:

Bestwood Advice Centre
Clifton Advice Centre
Meadows Advice Group
Nottingham Law Centre
St Anns Advice Group



As Nina found, our knowledge of legal rights and local processes can prove vital, especially in helping de-escalate situations where someone might lose their home.

Our aims

Our aims are:

- To provide the advice people need for the problems they face
- To improve the policies and practices that affect peoples lives

Our services

Clients can contact us by telephone, letter or by calling into the main office on Carrington Street, Nottingham or one of our outreaches.

Our outreach services are held at:

Arnold, Gedling Borough Council Offices, Arnot Hill Park

Calverton CORE Centre, 18 St Wilfrid's Square

Edwards Lane Community Centre, Alderton Road

Netherfield—St George's Centre, Victoria Road

Newstead Miners Welfare and Community Centre, Tilford Road

West Bridgford, Rushcliffe Community Contact Centre

Full details of all our services, contact details and opening times can be found on our website: www.citizensadvicenottingham.org.uk

24 hour information www.citizensadvice.org.uk



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Citizens Advice Nottingham & District is an operating name of Nottingham & District Citizens Advice Bureau.

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