

# Making a difference

Annual Report  
2018/19

For  
everyone,  
for 80  
years



**citizens  
advice**

**Nottingham  
& District**

## Foreword

I am pleased to make this introduction to our Annual Report for 2018/19. The report contains lots of information which shows the value of our services to our local citizens and their communities.

Firstly, my ongoing thanks to all involved: volunteers, staff and trustees, for their help and support, and most importantly the help they give to our citizens and communities at times of need. Plus, thanks to our funders and supporters for helping us to deliver our services. Together we all make it happen.

Throughout the year we have continued to deliver high quality services covering general advice and information, and going beyond this to provide support with more complex advice needs in welfare benefits, debt and housing to citizens of Nottingham, Gedling and Rushcliffe—a population of around 570,000 citizens.

I think it is an understatement to say that 2018/19 has been a year of fundamental change.

During the year, and ongoing into 2019/20, we have relocated to Maid Marian Way in Nottingham city centre. This was not, primarily, of our choice, but we have used this as an opportunity to look to the future and provide access to services and facilities to meet the changing and developing needs of our citizens.

The cost of relocation has been, for a local independent charity, significant. My thanks go to all those who have helped to date. Our fundraising to meet these and other costs is ongoing.

We were also able to participate in the national initiative between the Government and Citizens Advice to help people to claim Universal Credit. The feedback from clients and the Department for Work and Pensions locally is that we are having a significant beneficial impact.

Within this positive framework we face many challenges, not least of which are funding pressures. We continue to say many thanks to our funders, notably our local authorities who are under great financial pressures themselves. Recent information compiled by Nottingham City Council shows that for every £1 invested in advice services our community benefits by over £11 in welfare benefit income.

The need for our support and services is as important and crucial as ever. Our vision for Citizens Advice Nottingham and District to be the leading provider of information, advice and support services for local people and communities is stronger than ever.

**Richard Hodge**, Chair of the Trustees



**4 September 1939**

The day after World War II begins, Citizens Advice open in 200 locations to help people with the impacts



**1940**

Advisers deal with rationing, displacement and overcrowding issues and help people locate missing relatives



**1941**

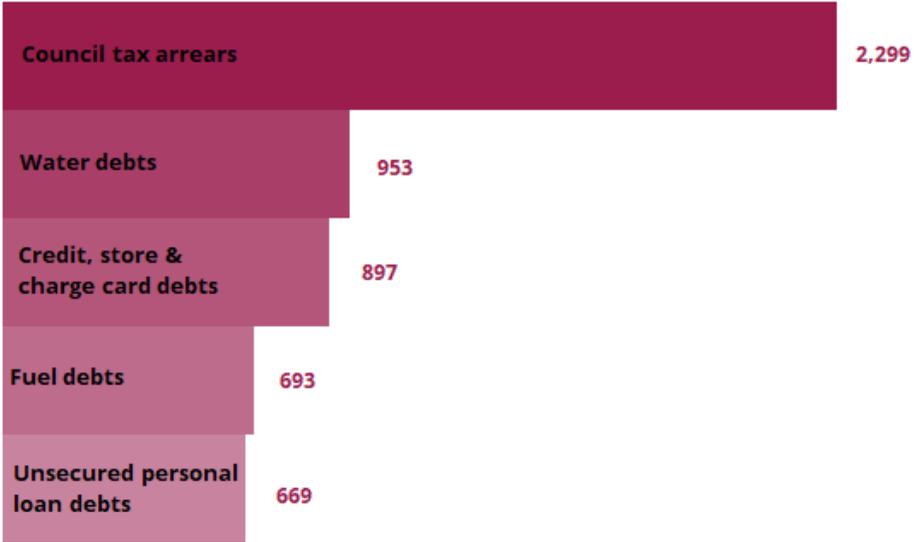
Citizens Advice introduce its first mobile service - a horsebox. This was able to travel to areas affected by the blitz, to help those most in need



Citizens Advice mobile horsebox

# We help thousands of people every year...

## Top five debt problems



**11,841** people received advice and information



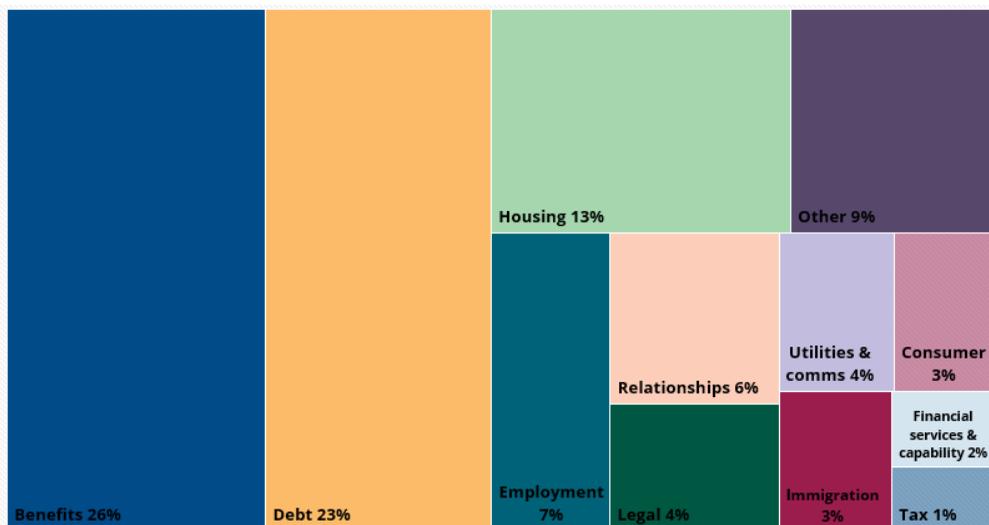
We handled **£13.7m** of debt and **£2m** in benefit income for our clients

## Top five benefit problems



## ... with lots of different problems

Our data helps us make sure we have the right knowledge and expertise to support people whatever their problem is



Area of law	No of clients
Benefits	3095
Consumer	371
Debt	2707
Employment	812
Fin services & capability	183
Housing	1545
Immigration	363
Legal	495
Other	1036
Relationships	659
Tax	154
Utilities & Comms	421

\* Other includes Discrimination, Education, Health & Community Care, Travel & Transport

# Putting our clients' needs at the heart of everything we do

From knowing whether to challenge an employment decision to checking an energy contract, our clients can expect the same approach from us.

Our primary objective is to get the best for our clients, and that is what determines the advice we give.



**8 in 10**

people said their problem was solved following advice



**9 in 10**

people said we helped them find a way forward



**4 in 5**

people said our advice improved their lives, including improving their health and finances



**1941**  
Citizens Advice influence the rationing policy to secure extra clothing coupons for pregnant women



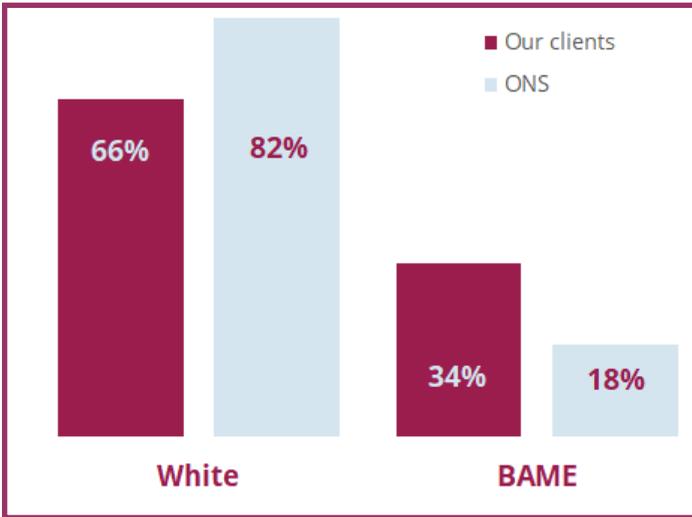
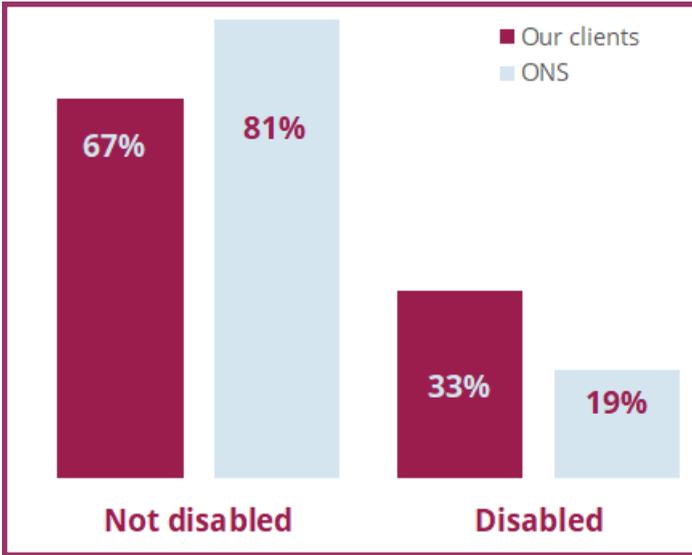
**1944**  
Advisers successfully argue for an urgent need for evacuation of children from London during the German bombing campaign



**1946**  
Citizens Advice continue to influence rationing policy post-war, including securing more cheese for gardeners



**1946**  
An influx of enquiries around family problems caused by the war, including increasing divorce rates and family break-ups



*These graphs compare the percentage of the local population (Office of National Statistics 2011) with the percentage of our clients by disability and ethnicity.*



**1960**  
The number of enquiries on consumer issues doubles in just 2 years



**1963**  
Citizens Advice provide evidence to the Ministry of Housing to help inform new housing policy



**1965**  
The total number of enquiries reaches 1.25 million



Citizens Advice on wheels

# Launching Help to Claim

In November 2018 Citizens Advice began piloting the new Help to Claim service. The service went live on 1 April 2019.

The service supports people in the early stages of their Universal Credit claim, from application through to first full payment. It's being delivered by the local network of Citizens Advice, and people can get help on the phone, face to face, or using webchat.

The Help to Claim programme follows years of work advising Universal Credit claimants and advocating for changes in the way the benefit was designed and delivered. In 2018/19, Citizens Advice nationally helped 150,000 people with Universal Credit problems and have helped over 230,000 people since the roll-out began.

Help to Claim in Nottingham went live on 4 March 2019 as part of the early mobilisation of the project. Our local team consists of a Project Manager, two Supervisors and 10.4 Support Workers. Help to Claim staff are based at Loxley House (Nottingham City Council/DWP) and the Jobcentres at Parliament Street, Bulwell and Arnold, and alongside advice centres in Bestwood and Clifton.



 Citizens Advice outreach kit from the 1970s



**1972**  
The Citizens Advice Service become independent



**1972**  
Citizens Advice submit evidence to the Lane Committee on the working of the Abortion Act, following legalisation of abortion in 1968. It showed that more publicity was needed to the provisions of the Act to both the general public and doctors



**1977**  
Citizens Advice help the Office of Fair Trading establish the true extent of many consumer problems

# Our volunteers

Our volunteers give their time, skills and experience to enable us to reach as many people as we do.

There are also benefits for them too, such as learning new skills, and improving health and wellbeing, while strengthening community engagement.

In order to deliver a high quality service to our clients, we continually invest in volunteer recruitment and development.

This year our trained volunteers donated just over **12,200 hours** of their time to provide advice to local people.



## Thank you to all our volunteers

**Citizens Advice Nottingham & District wouldn't be the same without you!**



**1984**  
For the first time, social security is the most common enquiry, reflecting the increasing numbers of people who are reliant on it



**1984**  
A review of Housing Benefit regulation is announced after Citizens Advice present evidence to parliament



**1985**  
The miners' strike leads to a spike of enquiries on benefits, fuel, housing and consumer debts



**1987**  
Enquiries about benefits and help to understand major welfare reforms increase throughout the whole of the 1980s, but are particularly high between 1987 and 1989

## Using our influence to tackle people's problems

Through our work and analysis of client data and wider evidence, we identify and respond to the structural and policy issues that contribute to problems for people in society. During the year this included:

- Hosting a meeting with MPs and local people to discuss ESA, PIP and DLA refusals. Open discussions were held to talk about the emotional impact of the application process. Written case studies were also produced
- Submitting a case study and supplementary information to Alex Norris MP for a Westminster Hall debate on the rollout of Universal Credit in Nottingham
- Taking an active role in Nottingham City Council's Universal Credit Rollout Steering Group
- Building good working relationships with Nottingham City Councillors and working to influence local policy making
- Organising and hosting the Advisers' Forum; a bi-monthly meeting for welfare benefits, housing and debt advisers in Nottingham city
- Speaking at the National Housing Federation's Welfare Reform Group about our Local Housing Allowance research
- Being part of the NAWRA conference, held in Nottingham. Trish Eaton, our Chief Officer, spoke at the event about joint working with Nottingham City Council and advice partners in the city.



**1990**

The first half of the 1990s Citizens Advice help people struggling with poll tax arrears, and then with council tax arrears from 1993 onwards



**1993**

Spike of enquiries around the Child Support Act



**1998**

Citizens Advice successfully campaign against changes in court fees which made it difficult for poor people to gain access to justice



**1999**

Self-help website [advice.org.uk](http://advice.org.uk) is launched

## Spotlight on ...

### The growing housing crisis in Nottingham city

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates have not risen since 2016, despite market rents increasing. Therefore, it has become very difficult to find properties within the LHA rates. In recent years, Nottingham's private-rented sector has blossomed. Three and four-bedroom houses, which were previously rented by local families, have been converted into Homes of Multiple Occupation (HMOs), or single rooms within shared accommodation. Rents from HMOs and shared accommodation yield greater returns for investors, but leave local families struggling to find somewhere to live.

However, finding a property is only half of the story. We know people in receipt of welfare benefits are regularly discriminated against within the private-rented sector, with Shelter and Crisis campaigning for an end to 'DSS discrimination'.

We worked with Lilian Greenwood MP to help secure an Adjournment Debate in the House of Commons. Lilian referred to our report and findings in her speech and has asked the government to respond to our concerns.



**2001**

Citizens Advice launch emergency advice services for communities affected by Foot and Mouth disease and negotiates with banks and building societies to ensure sympathetic treatment of rural businesses whose income is virtually stopped by the crisis



**2003**

Citizens Advice become the first in the sector to audit the quality of their advice



**2003**

Enquiries on tax credits rise and a high number of enquiries around welfare reform during the whole decade

## 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 (*Money & Pensions Service from April 2019*)  
Capital One  
MS Society (Nottingham branch)

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.



**2005**

Citizens Advice issue a super-complaint to the Office of Fair Trading on the cost and effectiveness of payment protection insurance (PPI)



**2007**

Citizens Advice receive a large number of enquiries around the non-return of tenancy deposits up until 2007, when a new tenancy deposit protection law comes into force after 15 years of campaigning on the issue



**2008**

An influx of enquiries from those who had very high levels of borrowing up until the financial crash in 2008, after which enquiries around unemployment rise

# 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



Testing web chat at Citizens Advice Annual Conference



**2014**

Citizens Advice present evidence to government and regulators showing a growth in bad lending and debt collection practices by payday lenders. This results in a cap on the cost of payday loans and tightened regulation



**2014**

Citizens Advice telephone service 'Adviceline' takes its millionth call



**2015**

Citizens Advice take on 2 new services, Pension Wise and the Witness Service



**2015**

Citizens Advice introduce web chat and begin a major redesign of its digital services in line with how people search for help online

## Our aims are:

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

## Our services

Clients can contact us by telephone, letter or by calling into the main office on Maid Marian Way, Nottingham or one of our outreaches which can be found 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  
**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](http://www.citizensadvicenottingham.org.uk)



£

**2017**

Citizens Advice persuade energy networks to give money back to people in Great Britain after it found they made £7.5 billion in excess profits



**2017**

Citizens Advice roll out Casebook, a new case management system, across the service



**2018**

Citizens Advice secured funding to deliver a service that helps clients make a Universal Credit claim



**2018**

Citizens Advice issue a super-complaint to the Competition and Markets Authority as loyal customers are paying too much for services like broadband

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

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Nottingham NG1 6HS

Registered charity number: 701259

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