

Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau Annual Review 2012-2013

News in brief

Following changes made in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill, which came into force on 31st March 2013, Legal Aid was abolished for most categories of social welfare law. Virtually overnight a large number of Charnwood residents found themselves with no access to help or assistance with debt or welfare benefit issues. Most of these were single people or lone parents on low incomes or reliant on benefits. 50% had a physical or mental health issue. If that wasn't bleak enough, this was coupled with major changes in welfare benefits which left people even worse off financially and with more people facing the threat of losing their home. We saw an increase in children living in poverty and the emergence of more food banks particularly in and around Loughborough. The demand for our service increased. Clients were facing more problems and more complex issues.

In addition to giving clients help and advice to enable them to solve their problems we were able to help clients maximise their household income by £3.5 million. This is largely made up of unclaimed benefits and debts written off.

Over the last few years we have been nurturing partnerships with other organisations so we can provide the best possible service to clients. For many years we have worked in partnership with SureStart Children Centres, Macmillan Cancer Support Trust and Leicestershire County Council, and we are a strategic partner of Charnwood Borough Council and have worked closely with them on joint goals and outcomes. There are positive aspects of joint working but also significant challenges. As a result of our experience in partnership working we have been fortunate to secure two pots of development funding. Since April we have been working in two GP surgeries to assist clients with problems which may be contributing to their ill health. We have also been awarded a Big Lottery grant to lead 'Charnwood Connect', a partnership of 8 organisations from the advice giving sector. The aim is to increase capacity and build resilience into the advice provision across Charnwood. This fits very well into the Coalition Government's 'localism' agenda in which investment, power and knowledge goes to frontline public and voluntary sector services, local community groups and neighbourhoods.

Our objects are:

To promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of the community in Charnwood and the surrounding areas ("the area of benefit") by the advancement of education, the protection and preservation of health and the relief of poverty, sickness and distress.

The service aims:

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

Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.



CHAIR'S REPORT (Nov 12 – Nov 13)

On 31st March 2013, our Legal Services Commission contract ended after 11 years. Our Big Lottery project – Volunteers in Specialist Advice - finished at the same time. Inevitably the ending of over one third of our funding caused a shift in the work of the Bureau.

Happily, new sources of income have been attracted thanks to the efforts of Moya Hoults, our Manager. The principal one is another Big Lottery grant from a national funding stream called the Advice Services Transition Fund, designed to cushion the impact of the ending of Legal Services Commission work. This is a two year project which commenced on 1st October 2013. Its central feature is to work with seven other partners to create "Charnwood Connect", a process for bringing together the voluntary advice sector in the Borough to work together to improve communication and the services that they deliver to their clients.

Another new piece of work, funded by Trading Standards, is to promote consumer awareness by rolling out a series of roadshows throughout the county called "Rat on a Rogue".

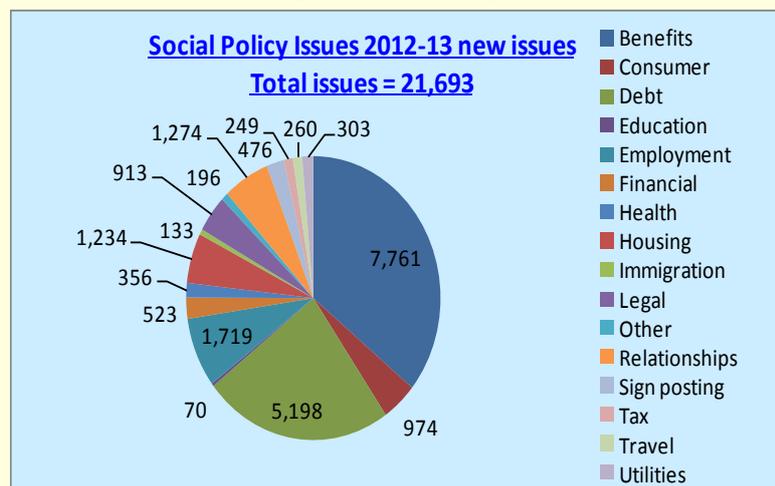
These and other new sources of funding have enabled us to find employment for our staff, albeit with altered roles. Our employees have responded positively to these changes in their environment. I must also praise our volunteers who donated time worth an amazing £326,740 during the last financial year.

There have been a number of changes to our Trustee Board. Graham Martin, Lynn Clarke and Claire Bellamy left us. Mayuri Patel and Hilary Fryer joined and left. Ian Bradford also joined the Board. We thank them all for their contributions to the work of the Board.

Over the next few months, I am looking forward to us developing a closer relationship with our big neighbour, LeicesterShire CAB. Countywide working is increasingly the way forward.

David Rodgers.

FACTS AND FIGURES



COMMENTS FROM OUR CLIENTS

- *"I would like to thank you for your help and advice - I feel a weight has been lifted from my shoulders"*
- *"you have helped us tremendously in winning the tribunal and your support has been invaluable in what has been a very trying time"*
- *"Thank you for helping me with my benefit appeal - a brilliant result, for which I can't thank you enough"*
- *"Thank you for helping me out with a council tax problem - you CAB volunteers are little heroes"*
- *"Without your help and expert knowledge I wouldn't have got anywhere, so thanks again for all your time and effort"*
- *"I'd like to thank you so very much for your help, especially as you give it freely, it is so much appreciated"*

In October 2013 Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau successfully gained funding from the Big Lottery to run a new two year project



Charnwood Connect (CC) is the new Big Lottery funded project based in Charnwood, Leicestershire. Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), in partnership with The Bridge will work with other agencies, including Charnwood Borough Council, to achieve more for service users and service providers. Charnwood Connect will build on the success of the individual partner agencies to promote and develop a more "joined up" approach to advice service delivery across the borough.

Other partners include Charnwood Borough Council, PACE, Living Without Abuse, Youth Shelter, Human Rights and Equality (Charnwood), Loughborough University, John Storer Charnwood

Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau has teamed up, once again, with Leicestershire County Council Trading Standards to raise consumer awareness across the county. The focus is on the unfair practices of rogue traders and doorstep sellers and the campaign takes the form of road shows in various community venues both outdoors and indoors. So far the road shows have visited Loughborough Market, Loughborough Mela festival, Hinckley Market, Blaby Older People's Forum Day and Oadby 'Young at Heart' Day. As well as informing people about how to avoid being caught by rogue traders, we also invite them to tell us about any bad experiences they or their friends and relatives may have encountered, so the information can be passed to our colleagues in Trading Standards. The campaign runs from May 2013 to March 2014.

'Rat on a Rogue' Campaign



Raising awareness at the Mela

www.charnwoodcab.co.uk

In November 2012 Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau proudly launched its new website www.charnwoodcab.co.uk.

This was only made possible with an enormous amount of help from Cuttlefish Media Ltd and our Publicity volunteers.

It is now possible to donate directly to our bureau via the website using 'Virgin Money Giving'



Follow us on **Twitter** and **Facebook** via our website.



THANK YOU

Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau would like to thank those individually who have given their time and commitment; our funders for their generosity and support; and those organisations we work in partnership with.

A special thanks go to:

Our Volunteers, Paid Staff, Trustee Board Members, Officers and Elected Members of Charnwood Borough Council, Leicestershire County Council, Legal Services Commission, Shephed Town Council, Citizens Advice, Macmillan Cancer Support Trust, SureStart, RNIB College Loughborough, Big Lottery Fund, Santander, Cuttlefish Media Ltd, Ian Knowles Computer Services, The Bridge, Loughborough University and other partners of Charnwood Connect,

Charnwood Citizens Advice
Bureau Registered Office:

Woodgate Chambers
70 Woodgate
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 2TZ

Tel: 0844 4171025 from landline
Tel: 0300 3301025 from mobile
Tel: 01509 221220 general admin
Fax: 01509 221203

www.charnwoodcab.org.uk
www.adviceguide.org.uk

CA Membership No: 45/0016
Registered Charity No: 1102353
Company Limited by guarantee No:4984410

OPENING TIMES

LOUGHBOROUGH - Woodgate Chambers:

Monday	9.30am – 4.00pm
Tuesday	9.30am – 12.30pm
Wednesday	9.30am – 12.30pm
Thursday	9.30am – 6.00pm
Friday	pre arranged appointments only

SHEPSHED - Community Centre,
47a Charnwood Road

Wednesday	9.30am – 1.00pm
Friday	9.30am – 12.30pm

CONTACT US

Shepshed	01509	506663
Money Advice	01509	221215
Welfare Benefits	01509	221215
SureStart	01509	221202
To volunteer	01509	221213
Leicestershire County Debt Line :		
	0844	2480040
CAB Macmillan Helpline	0300	4568400
CAB Macmillan Direct line	01509	221208

April 2012—November 2013 - Paid Staff

Bureau Manager	Moya Hoult
Supervisors	Kusum Tandon Ian Dennis Sandra Bailey* Jim Wilkinson* Bhupen Ramjee
Specialist Caseworkers	Alan Birch Irene O'Malley Nikky Smith Sam Barradell Carlton Cole* Margot Woods
Macmillan Caseworker	Bina Sakaria
SureStart Caseworkers	Kalpna Khatri* Joanna Freeman Sam Barradell
Consumer Gathering	Ann Bates Jude Warrior
Administration	Jo-Ann Murdoch Jan Ellis * Mamta Lakhani Hilary Fryer* Varsha Gohil* Sanita Ramjee* Anne Bailey*

Volunteer Advisors and Assessors

Ada Harrop	Alan Murphy
Alice Brenan*	Bernard Saunders
Bhupendra Ramjee*	Chris Downes*
Colin Moss	David Gallagher
Denise Turner-Johnson *	Doriter Orton
Eric Atkinson	Fiona Barber
Gail Tillen	Gill Clarke*
Graham Mckay	Helen Cattermole
Helen Lister	Ian Harrison
Jill Butler	Jilly Skevington
Jude Warrior*	Julie Gardner*
Kathleen Hill	Lesley Howell
Margaret Thompson	Mike Grocott
Nicole Tickle	Nigel Bennett
Peter Sayer	Phil Watson
Rob Dixon	Ruth Youngs
Sandra Bailey	Sandra Utteridge
Sue Hubbard	Sanita Ramjee*
Tony Buttler	Tony Guice
Tony Wilkinson	Val Glynn
Varsha Gohil*	Wendy Parmenter

Website Ruth Van Bunnens * / Jude Warrior*

Volunteer Administration

Anisa Ahmed*	Anne Bailey
Cathy Yallop	Chrissy Oates
Christine Stanley	Derek Stonier
Esther Marriott	Gill Goodman *
Pushpa Ladwa	Sue Hufton
Sue Macfaden*	Mavis Blowers
Hilary James	

Work Experience and RNIB placements

* left between April 12 and November 13