



Clients helped by
East Dorset Citizens Advice
April 2018 to March 2019

 **2,042** people asked us for advice  With **6,553**

 2,865 benefit issues	 850 debt issues	 514 housing issues
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 **42%** of all activity was face to face advice

 £812,907 income gained	 £172,736 gained in debts written off
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52% clients disabled or have long term condition, **20%** of whom had a mental health problem

 **51** volunteers with a total value of **£318,750**

EAST DORSET CITIZENS ADVICE

SUMMARY IMPACT REPORT 2018-19

2018-19

2018-19 has been a very busy year with a marked increase in the needs of our clients as well as a significant increase in the complexity of cases.

To ensure we reach the whole of our community we have focused on locating our advice sessions in the places where they are needed the most. We have already moved our Ferndown advice session into the central library which is much more accessible for the clients. In addition, we now have an advice session every Thursday in the Heatherlands Centre on the Trickett's Cross estate, Ferndown. This has proved to be very popular with an average of more than 9 clients a week. This is in addition to the advice sessions in Cranborne, Verwood , Colehill and the West Moors Army Camp.

Alongside these outreach centres, we have our main base in Wimborne. Here we offer face to face advice four days a week. We also offer telephone advice through the Dorset Adviceline and E:mail advice through our website. The use of the E:mail service has increased significantly over the past year. We also work alongside CiTA in delivering Universal Support to assist Universal Credit applicants.

Our team consists of 10 paid staff members, mostly part time and 51 volunteers. Our advice is independently audited against the Advice Quality Standard (AQS) to ensure that we consistently provide accurate, relevant and quality advice. We aim to help anyone who contacts us - even the smallest of enquiries are dealt with in the same way as something far more complex.

2019-20 and beyond

We are looking to continue the expansion of our advice services into the more rural areas of East Dorset. We have identified that due to cutbacks in rural transport a lot of our clients are unable to get to us and these are often the people who need face to face support as they are unable to access what they need on the internet.

We continue to focus on increasing our volunteer base to ensure we have the right quality and diversity of advisors to meet our clients' needs.