

# Annual Review 2018-19



*I can honestly say that I was at my lowest ebb and unable to face my situation, with the help of the amazing team at Citizens Advice I am well on my way to getting my life back on track*

**citizens  
advice**

**Rushmoor**



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It has been another very successful year for Citizens Advice Rushmoor. The move of our Farnborough office from the Community Centre to the Civic Offices has provided many benefits, including increased client footfall, and more joined up working with key stakeholders. I thank our paid and volunteer staff teams, who have been fantastic in making this move a success.

The move has provided increased opportunities for integrated working, with our Heathlands team joining the Farnborough office. The Aldershot office continues to provide an excellent base for service delivery and partnership working, and now includes our Pension Wise team.

Our clients remain at the centre of everything we do; the very positive feedback received confirms the huge difference our service can make – often at times of crisis in people’s lives.

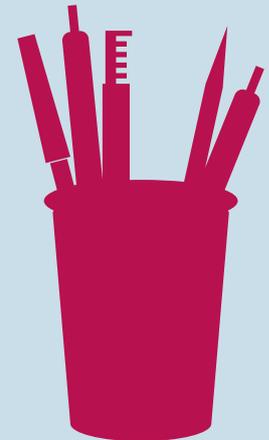
I am fortunate to be part of such a great team and I thank them for their hard work and resilience this year.

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***Mark Chatterton***

**Chair’s foreword**





**Alex Hughes**

**Chief Officer**

*We are confident all these great strengths will see us thrive through the next 80 years!*

In a period of increasing uncertainty, we can all take pride in the 80th birthday of our national service, knowing we are needed now as much as ever. Our core principles of free, independent and impartial advice remain unchanged; underpinned by our ability to adapt and respond positively to change and challenge.

Our Farnborough premises move had been under consideration for some years: making it a successful reality was the result of expert help from the Rushmoor project team, along with the focus on detail from our staff. The move has undoubtedly improved our visibility, enhancing our offer to clients, as well as creating more joined up working within our team, and with key partners.

Alongside this major change to our organisation, we have continued to develop and deliver new projects. In addition to expanding and consolidating existing projects, we have also been innovating and reaching more people through our CLEAR project (see page 4).

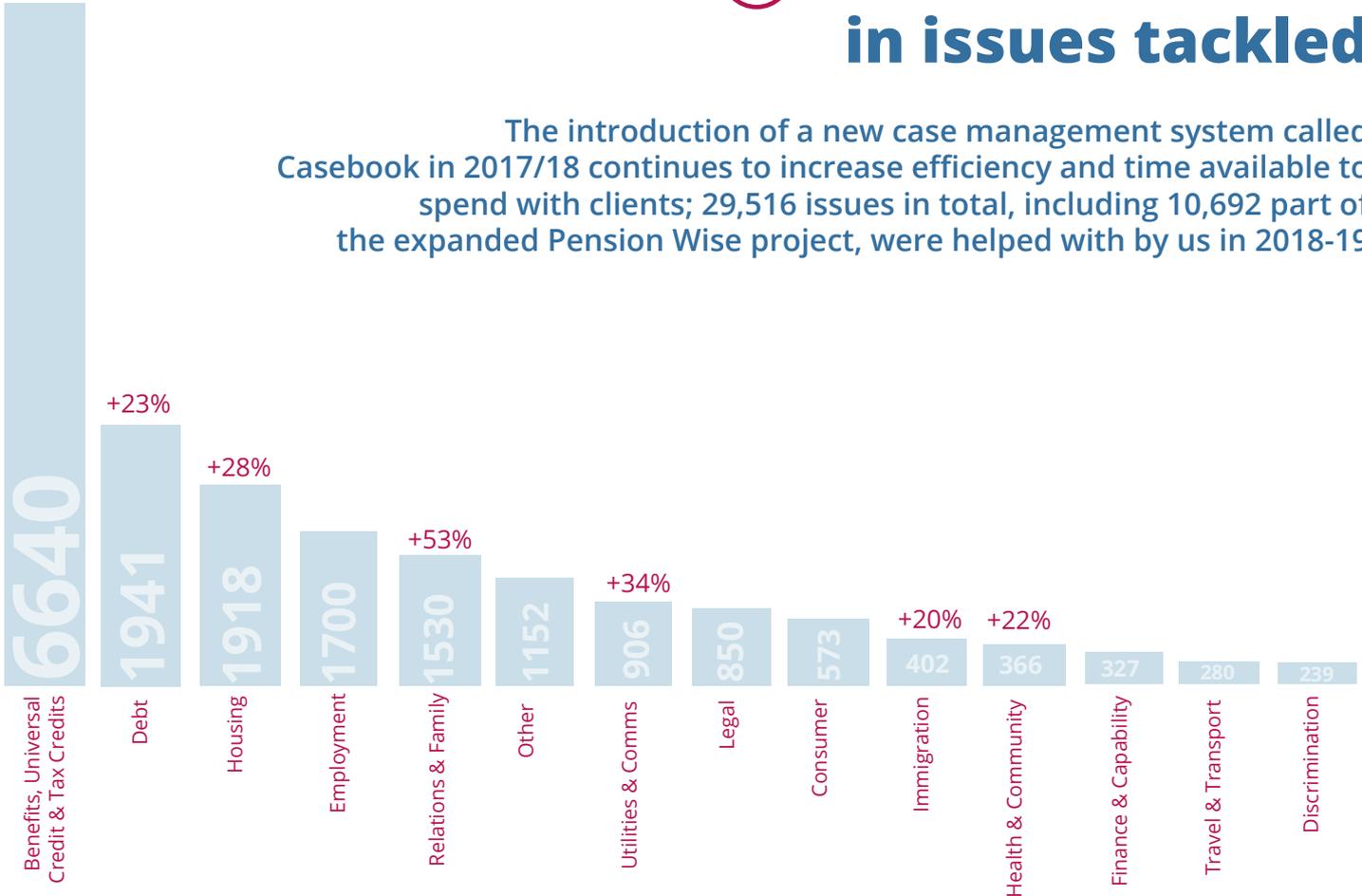
The flexibility of our team in adapting and delivering key services is especially apparent in our Help to Claim project (see page 4) which utilises skill levels across our whole team.

+164% Increase in  
Universal Credit issues

③

## 18% increase in issues tackled

The introduction of a new case management system called Casebook in 2017/18 continues to increase efficiency and time available to spend with clients; 29,516 issues in total, including 10,692 part of the expanded Pension Wise project, were helped with by us in 2018-19



## ④ Community

We continue to innovate and develop to meet a wide variety of client needs, through our work in the community - particularly evident in our **CLEAR** (Community Learning Empowerment and Resilience) Project. This has involved recruiting and training Nepali speaking Community Champions, who then share key financial capability information in a range of Nepali community settings, in their own language.

On a very different scale, we are proud to be part of the new “**Help to Claim**” service, which harnesses the strength of the national Citizens Advice network to address identified problems with claiming Universal Credit, not least in providing outreach at both local Jobcentres. The strength of our diverse team enables us to tailor the service to meet individual needs, ranging from light touch webchat through to expert casework.

A small pilot project working with **Young Carers** was a great example of partnership working, to reach a very vulnerable group.

We continue to develop our key **Mental Health** initiatives in our core service, as well as at the psychiatric hospital and community settings. Our partnership work with Rushmoor’s **Housing Options** team enables expert advice and some great outcomes for clients facing homelessness and poor housing.

This year we launched our **Domestic Abuse** page of our website to highlight the tailored service we offer in partnership with the Domestic Abuse Forum and other agencies.

Our **Adviceline** service continues to be a key focus, recognising that for many this is the preferred initial contact.

By joining up with other Citizens Advice offices, we have been able to significantly enhance the response times for Rushmoor residents.



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Our volunteers gave over **40,000** hours last year helping local people



The estimated value of their contribution to our work was **£720,461**

### Case Study 1:

Ben approached us for help after discharge from a short prison remand term: he had no money, no support and was desperate – he told us he wanted to end it all.

He was struggling with his Universal Credit as he had no identification documents to verify his claim.

Our staff guided him through the claim process, and liaised with the Jobcentre.

We were able to reassure Ben about the alternative ways to verify his ID; so with our help he was able to complete his claim and get an immediate advance payment the same day.

### Case Study 2:

Jane had dropped out of university due to a decline in her mental health; she was experiencing emotional abuse at home, and with no income she needed to become independent.

Our Heathlands team successfully supported Jane with a claim for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), and after her Personal Independence Payment was turned down, we were successful in supporting her appeal.

As a result, Jane established her financial independence from her family, which in turn improved her mental health significantly. She has now returned to university, and is concentrating on her studies.

## ⑥ Our people

A commitment to our people is recognised at all levels of the organisation, with a key strategic objective to “Make Citizens Advice Rushmoor a great place to work and volunteer” with responsibility held at trustee level for bringing this strategy to life.

Our annual people survey is taken seriously, recognising and building on strengths where we are rated highly, as well as addressing identified areas for improvement.

Some comments from our team about why they volunteer include:

*“Giving me confidence, and building my experience and knowledge, being treated with respect, feeling valued and what I do is of worth”*

*“Being able to use the skills I have gained throughout my working life to benefit those who need it”*

*“Knowing we are not only helping individuals, but also helping to improve things for everyone through our research and campaigning work”*



Volunteers Jacqui and Ellen

At Citizens Advice Rushmoor, we are supported by more than 100 volunteers who regularly give up their time. Some stay for a few months – others for many years. To illustrate this, pictured outside our Aldershot office is Ellen – a recent graduate - on her first day and Jacqui, who has been with us for over 32 years!

As an organisation we are very proud of showing the reality of the diversity and inclusion evident among our paid staff, volunteers and trustees. This echoes our deep commitment to equality, recognising the need to continually build awareness.

A focused review of the Trustee Board this year has resulted in some big changes to our governance structure, with a more defined role for individual trustees. This has enabled a greater level of engagement with our staff team, which has enriched the understanding of the board as a whole, alongside more informed and meaningful discussions at board meetings.

We have welcomed new members, and are confident that the active involvement shown by the whole board will continue to support and shape the organisation to meet community needs.



## 7 Trustees

Mark Chatterton (Chair)

Brian Cottrell (Treasurer)

Gerald Baker

Donna Bone

Malcolm Cummins (from November 2018)

Anne Fillis

Janet Field (to November 2018)

Barbara Hurst (to November 2018)

Andrew Levey (from June 2019)

William Miller (to January 2019)

Marybeth Quaintmere (from November 2018)

Frank Rust

Richard Robinson (to November 2018)

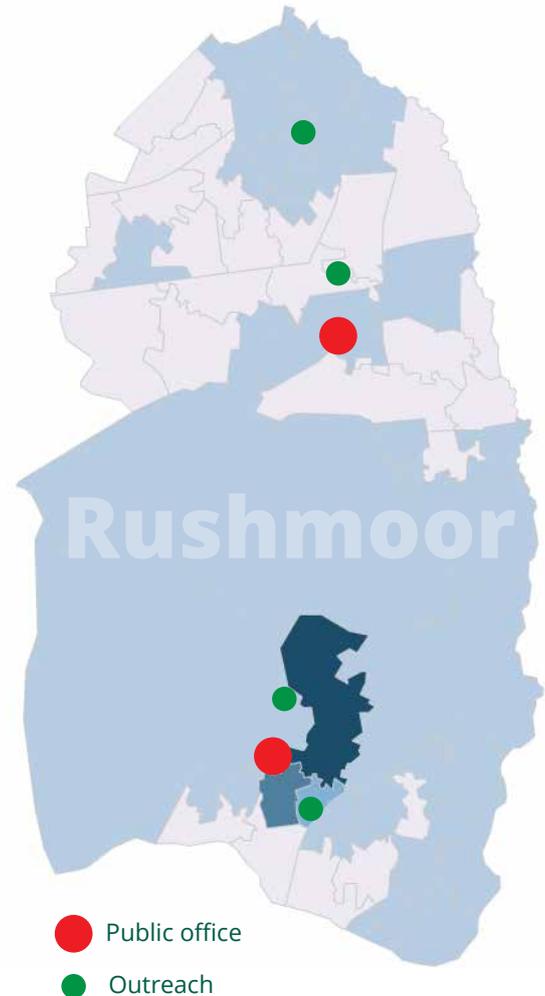
## ⑧ Advice trends

We have been carefully monitoring Universal Credit trends, which, as roll out continues, forms an ever-growing part of our work. Our successful delivery of the Energy Best Deal project helped gain over £9,000 for individuals in savings on energy costs.

The huge growth in our Pension Wise service reflects the national picture, with additional capacity brought in this year to better meet demand.

The ongoing programme of welfare reform continues to hit those with physical and mental health issues disproportionately, as disability related benefits are targeted for change.

An increasing focus on quality of advice on debt has led to a range of training and development for our team, who continue to focus on supporting clients in sometimes desperate circumstances.





# The Pension Wise Team

Citizens Advice Rushmoor is one of 16 local Citizens Advice offices who have been delivering the government's Pension Wise service for the last four years. Launched in April 2015, Pension Wise gives expert guidance to help people understand their options under the pension freedoms.

We deliver face to face Pension Wise appointments to people aged 50 and over in 20 different locations across Hampshire, Surrey, West Sussex and Berkshire.

The Rushmoor team gave guidance to 4,925 clients in 2018 with 10,692 issues, achieving consistently high satisfaction ratings of over 98%

***“Brilliant service - the guider was very helpful and clearly explained each option; he set my mind at ease because now I know the steps to take”***

## Preventing problems

Our data enables active monitoring of the impact on clients, feeding into our national body of evidence which can in turn help shape government policy. The Help to Claim service was in large part based on identified failures in Universal Credit, addressing some of the most pressing needs for clients.

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# Our value to society in 2018/19

In 2018/19, for every £1 invested in Citizens Advice Rushmoor by our local authority we generated at least:



**£2.00**

in fiscal benefits  
**Savings to government**  
Reduction in health service demand, local authority homeless services, and out of work benefits for our clients and volunteers.

**£18.28**

in public value  
**Wider economic and social benefits**  
Improvements in participation and productivity for clients and volunteers.

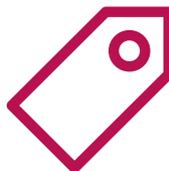
**£10.05**

in benefits to individuals  
**Value to our clients**  
Income gained through benefits gained, debts written off and consumer problems resolved.

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**906** clients gain a new award or an increase to their benefit worth a total of **£5,611,819** an average of **£6,197** per client



**612** clients with debt issues 81% of which were resolved including **£1,513,675** written off, an average of **£12,263** per client



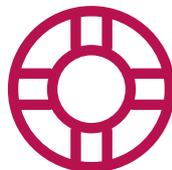
**293** clients successfully claim one-off awards or other outcomes, worth **£802,175**, an average of **£2,430** each



**£8,327,370** of improvement in health, well-being, participation and productivity for the **8936** clients we helped in 2018-19



**£460,249** in savings to our local authority and local housing providers by preventing evictions & homelessness



**£303,880** total savings to the NHS, and **£869,383** saving to the Department for Work and Pensions by keeping people in work

## We would like to thank:

**Rushmoor Borough Council**

**Pension Wise**

**Surrey Heath and NE Hants and Farnham CCGs**

**Broadhurst Trust**

**The Brain Tumour Charity**

**Prospect Estate Big Local**

**Citizens Advice Hampshire**

**Nat West Skills and Opportunities Fund**

## Who enabled us to deliver:

Our core, volunteer led service available to all Rushmoor residents – drop in, face to face, phone and email

Delivering guidance sessions across Hampshire, Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex

Specialist casework services for clients with severe and enduring mental health conditions

Outreach services and support for clients with mild to moderate mental health conditions

Benefits surgery delivered by telephone to beneficiaries of the charity

Financial inclusion service for residents in PEBL area

Face to face advice and information as part of wider “health watchdog” service

CLEAR Project training community champions to in turn deliver training in their own language (Nepali)

*Community Learning Empowerment and Resilience*

**RUSHMOOR**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



**NHS**  
**Surrey Heath**  
**Clinical Commissioning Group**

**NHS**  
**North East Hampshire and Farnham**  
**Clinical Commissioning Group**



**ARMY**



**healthwatch**  
Hampshire



*We would also like to thank all of the local solicitors who regularly volunteer their time and expertise free of charge to help our clients.*

*This service is ever more important as legal aid funding has virtually disappeared.*

**Free, confidential advice.  
Whoever you are.**

We help people find a way forward with their problems and campaign on big issues when their voices need to be heard.

We value diversity, champion equality and challenge discrimination and harassment.

We're here for everyone.



**[citizensadviserushmoor.org.uk](https://citizensadviserushmoor.org.uk)**

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