

CANF Newsletter

Citizens Advice New Forest Newsletter

January 2019

Citizens Advice Celebrates 80 Years, serving the community

Can you help us tell the story of Citizens Advice?

Citizens Advice turns 80 in 2019 and we'd like your help to show the difference our advice has made.

If we've helped you at any time, please share your story with us. Find out more at:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/yourstory.



We've been helping people solve their problems since 1939.

Please get in touch and tell us about *your* Citizens Advice memories, stories or experiences — whatever they are! If you're coming to the Volunteer Fair, pop by our stand and tell us ...

In this Issue ...

- Working with partners to help vulnerable clients
- Spotlight on Our Fantastic Volunteers
- Six top tips to sort out your debts



We're at the
Volunteer Fair
Come & say
hello!

27 January 2019

10:30 am — 4pm

**Lyndhurst
Community Centre**

Working in partnership to help vulnerable young people

A young vulnerable client was referred to Citizens Advice from the local Council. She was at risk of homelessness.

They sent her to us to help with a Nightstop referral, which is a local service which provides temporary emergency accommodation in people's homes for vulnerable people. Our adviser completed the detailed Nightstop referral forms with the client and made contact with the local Job Centre to ask for their help with a claim for Universal Credit (UC).

The client was able to go straight across to the Job Centre where they worked with her to complete her UC claim. She waited there until a volunteer Nightstop driver came to pick her up and take her safely to her accommodation.

The local Job Centre manager tells us what happened next:

“Just a short note to say a big “thank you” regarding our customer.

Citizens Advice for referring to Nightstop and then on to the Job Centre for her UC claim and Nightstop for finding a host. I know that between our three organisations we prevented a very young vulnerable person from living on the streets.

So that you are aware the Team here in the Jobcentre pulled out the stops and got the customer up and running on UC (with an immediate advance payment made) from the time CAB referred her to us to the time she was picked up from our office at 5:15pm by a Nightstop driver.

I am known here in the office to use the word “awesome” from time to time, in this situation I believe our Organisations, through working together, were truly AWESOME. Thank You ‘

Valuable
Opportunities
Life changing
Unpaid
New skills
Training
Exciting
Experience
Rewarding

You can volunteer at any one of six sites across the Forest: Hythe, Lymington (public office and our HQ), New Milton, Ringwood and Totton. Here's what one of our Totton volunteers, Paul, says about his time with us:

“I started volunteering as an adviser at Citizens Advice about 4 years ago. Citizens Advice is an amazing organisation – one that improves so many lives but seems so little known. I find it very rewarding, helping clients who for are struggling with the benefits system or with their debts – perhaps making small differences to their quality of life. They are almost always grateful. It is so gratifying to hear of successes – when someone with next to nothing has had their benefit reinstated. Citizens Advice standards are high and there is no doubt that it is challenging work but the training and support are outstanding.”



newforest
nightstop *



My volunteering at Citizens Advice

My name is Sandy and I started my training as a generalist adviser 18 years ago, when my eldest child started school.

I was in receipt of Income Support as a single parent but was not prepared to sit and watch daytime TV all day, so I looked for a volunteer role in the community.

Things were very different then; all case notes were written by hand and we had all information in large ring binders to share with clients. There was no telephone advice so we had a lot more people dropping in.

Of course the main aim of the volunteering, and what attracted me to it then and keeps me interested all these years later, remains the same – to help people and support those fighting against social injustice. Every session has a different mix of clients - you never know what is going to walk through the door.

Knowing you have helped someone, improved their situation, and on occasion made a financial gain on their behalf, is most rewarding. It is also very satisfying to gain new skills and volunteer with a lovely group of people that are of the same mindset with an interest in supporting local people.

It can be frustrating on occasion giving some advice and not knowing the outcome but this is far outweighed by the comforting knowledge that someone has benefitted from my input and support and that those who struggle to manage with their issues have somewhere to go for appropriate support.



Some of the reasons to volunteer at Citizens Advice New Forest

Have you thought of joining us?

If you are interested in discussing our volunteering opportunities, please get in touch (www.newforestcab.org.uk).

At the moment we are particularly interested in hearing from people with the following experience:

- professional fundraising;
- successful grant and bid-making
- in-depth knowledge of ICT networks
- administration and office management
- event organisation



Volunteer with us

Citizens Advice New Forest expects January 2019 to be busiest month for debt advice

The last day of January is expected to be the busiest day of the year for people seeking help with their debts, according to Citizens Advice New Forest.

Analysis of national data from the past 12 months reveals that on 31 January 2018, nationally Citizens Advice helped 2,800 people, 30 per cent above the daily average.

Citizens Advice New Forest has received funding from the Money Advice Service to employ a debt advice worker to meet the increasing demand for debt advice. Our debt advisers will help

people explore all the options available to them to make their money problems more manageable.

Citizens Advice New Forest provides assistance to people seeking help for a wide variety of debt concerns, including credit card debt, rent arrears and unsecured loans.

To help people kick off 2019 on a stronger financial footing, we are sharing our **Six Top Tips** to help people get their finances in order for the New Year.

- 1) **Work out how much you owe** - **Make a list** of who you owe money to and add up how much you need to pay each month.
- 2) **Prioritise your debts** - Your rent or mortgage, energy and council tax are called **priority debts** as there can be serious consequences if you don't pay them. **These should always be paid first.**
- 1) **Work out how much you can pay** - **Create a budget** by adding up your essential living costs, such as food and housing, and taking away these from your income. Any money you have spare can be put towards your debts. Citizens Advice's national web-based budgeting tool can help.
- 2) **Paying urgent debts** - You may have several priority debts and can't pay them all. **Contact all your creditors** to find out if you can negotiate on how much you pay, or when you pay them.
- 3) **Paying non-urgent debts** - If you have any money left after paying priority debts, consider getting a **free** debt management plan. You'll make one monthly payment to the plan provider, who will handle paying your creditors.
- 4) **If you can't pay your debts** - If you've got little or no money spare to pay your priority debts **seek advice from us straight away.**

Contact Us

Looking for advice?

You can call us on

0300 3309 009

or look at our website

citizensadvice.org.uk

We are also on **Twitter**

@CABNewForest

We are a local charity working in partnership with other organisations who are able to offer help and support to those in need. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

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