

Our Impact in 2021-22



**citizens
advice**

**North
Somerset**



Farid Saada
Chair of Trustees



Fiona Cope
Chief Officer

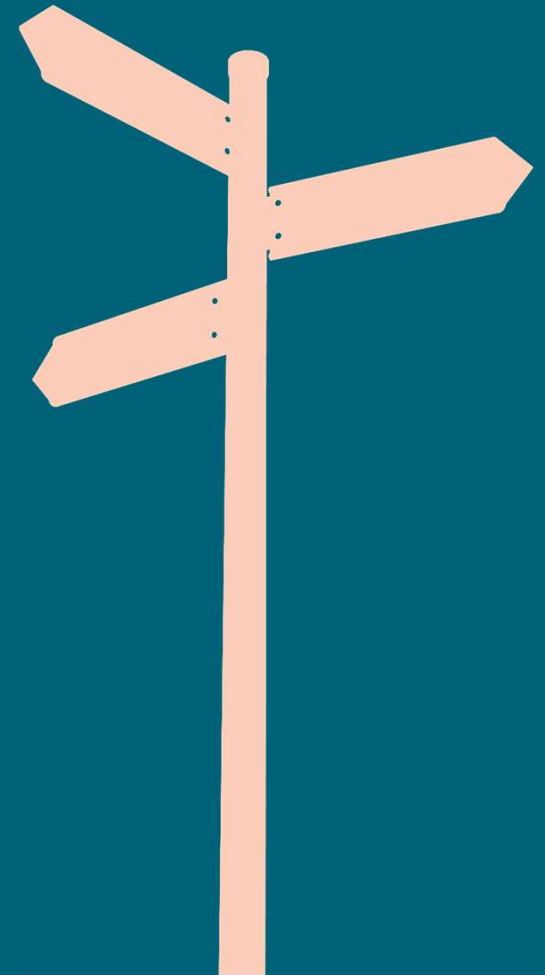
Our theme this year is **Agility & Resilience** reflecting the ever-evolving organisation that is Citizens Advice North Somerset. Like many organisations, we have faced multiple challenges dealing with the global pandemic and its continuing impact. Out of adversity comes success with a now established hybrid model of working both in relation to delivering a multi-channel advice service and our paid and volunteer teams working from home, out in the community and from our main office in Weston-super-Mare.

One of our five strategic objectives is to be more accessible across multiple channels, delivering a seamless client journey no matter where or how a person is advised and supported. To build on the success of our remote advice service, we have been working with our community partners to expanded our in-person advice. We are pleased to report we now operate from nine community locations across North Somerset and with the intention to develop more outreach in the coming year, particularly in rural areas to make our services as accessible as possible. In addition to this, and in response to the increasing demand due to the cost-of-living crisis, we hope to re-open our very successful Advice Shop in the Sovereign Centre, Weston-super-Mare.

We also set the objective to build resilience within our paid, volunteer and trustee teams, ensuring we have the skills, knowledge and ability now and in the future to deliver our advice, social prescribing and campaigning work. Our people are the heartbeat of our organisation and every day they do all they can to get the best outcomes for our clients. It is with their skill, knowledge, enthusiasm, and sheer tenacity that makes this organisation a great place to volunteer and work and we are both so very proud to be working along side them all.

We have a vision:

To improve the wellbeing and health of everyone living in North Somerset who needs help and support, by providing accessible, effective and tailored information and advice that is free, independent, confidential and impartial.



Confidence in our Service

Our aim is to provide a quality service for everyone:

- Our clients and their communities
- Our staff (paid and volunteer); and
- Our partners and funders.

We will deliver this through:

- Our advice services;
- Our research & campaign work;
- Our equality & diversity work;
- Our investment in our staff (paid and volunteer); and
- Our training provision.

We are proud to be a member of Citizens Advice. Our membership sets out the detailed requirements all Citizens Advice local offices must meet in order to be part of the service. These include:

- Governance and Strategic Planning
- Quality of Advice Assurance
- Financial Management
- People management
- Equality leadership

We are proud of our **Quality Marks** that demonstrate we are organised, easily accessible, effectively managed and we employ staff with the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of our clients.



Standing up for Equality

At Citizens Advice North Somerset we believe that our common humanity makes us equal in worth, dignity and rights. We value **diversity**, promote **equality** and challenge **discrimination**.

Our service is available to everyone living, working, or travelling through North Somerset, regardless of race or nationality, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age or marital status. We want to make sure everyone has access to our services. We are constantly reviewing how we can improve what we do and how we do it, to reach all those people who need our help.

We will be a stronger champion for equality by:

- challenging discrimination through advice
- championing equality through research and campaigns
- valuing diversity as an employer and volunteer agency



Who we are and what we do



Remote and in-person Generalist Advice – the CANS Generalist Service (telephone, email and in-person) is delivered by our team of Volunteer and paid Generalist Advisers, supported by a team of paid Advice Session Supervisors. In 2021-22 they helped **4,665** unique clients with over **12,000** issues. In-person advice services are available in Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Clevedon, Nailsea, Banwell, Winscombe, Pill, Yatton and The Big Worle Hub. We continue to look for opportunities to expand our in-person services to ensure people get the advice when and where they need it.



In-reach Services – dedicated services delivered by paid Advisers to service users of partner organisations. These services are available either in location or via remote access for:

- Weston General Hospital – Macmillan funded dedicated service for patients living with cancer
- Weston Court House – Legal Aid Agency funded dedicated service for people facing repossession
- Housing Advice – Legal Aid Agency / NSC Housing Prevention Team funded service for people facing homelessness
- WsM Foodbank – Trussell Trust funded dedicated service for those accessing support through the Foodbank



Dedicated Projects – we work in partnership with a number of local and national partners to deliver the following services:

- **Housing Advice** – we are funded by North Somerset Council and The Legal Aid Agency to provide housing advice and to run the Housing Possession Court Duty desk providing advice, support and representation for people at risk of losing their homes. In 2021-22 we helped **970** clients with **2,338** housing related issues. The value of our advice is worth **£650,944** to local housing providers by preventing housing evictions.
- **WHAM Project** – we work in partnership with The Centre for Sustainable Energy, Talking Money, We Care Home Improvements, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council, Citizens Advice Bristol to provide advice on energy, money, benefits and to carry out home repairs. In 2021-22 we helped **382** clients with fuel related enquiries.

Who we are and what we do



Dedicated Projects – continued

- **Debt Advice** – as a partner within Debt Free South West, CANS provided debt advice to **891** clients who presented with between **£6.5 million to £8.8 million** worth of debt. **487** clients went on to receive specialist level debt advice. The value of our debt advice to local residents is **£2,131,218** helping them to maximise their income, budget and manage their debts by negotiating with creditors, rescheduling payments, and writing debts off through insolvency.
- **#FirstSteps** - this is a multi-agency project with North Somerset Council and Liberata, to deliver advice and support to people in receipt of Council Tax Support who are in council tax arrears. In 2021-22 we supported **545** clients to maximise their income, manage their money and meet their liabilities.
- **Bristol Wessex Water** - funded by Bristol Wessex Water to support clients to access the variety of their schemes to assist those on low incomes or who have fallen into arrears with their water bills. In 2021-22 we supported **554** clients with water related enquiries and successfully supported **172** clients to apply for a Bristol Wessex Water social tariff.
- **Welfare Rights** – funded by North Somerset Council to support local residents to maximise their income through benefit applications and to challenge benefit decisions. In 2021-22 60% of our clients had a welfare benefit related enquiry and we dealt with over 8,500 issues worth **£7,241,435** in income gained through benefit claims and benefit appeals.
- **Macmillan Cancer Support Income Maximisation** – we work in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support to provide advice and assistance to people living with cancer, their families and carers. These services are delivered by dedicated advisers through face-to-face and telephone advice from locations to suit the client including home visits and at Weston General Hospital. In the calendar year 2021 we helped **939** clients with recorded outcomes of over **£1.1 million** in income gained through grant applications and benefit claims and through debts managed.

Who we are and what we do



Dedicated Projects – continued

- **Help to Claim** – funded by the Department for Work and Pensions through national Citizens Advice. In 2021-22 we provide support and assistance to **548** people making claims for Universal Credit from the initial application through their first full payment. We work in collaboration with Jobcentre Plus in Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare.
- **Pier Health PCN Social Prescribing Service** – a partnership between Pier Health PCN, Citizens Advice North Somerset and Alliance Homes. The service is delivered by a dedicated team of Link Workers providing a wide range of community related support with an emphasis on loneliness and isolation, and on the determinants of health, particularly low income, employment, learning, support, housing, debt, financial management and domestic abuse. In 2021-22 they worked with **637** local residents.
- **Social Prescribing (Older People)** – This service sits alongside the Pier Health PCN Social Prescribing Service and is funded by Quartet Community Foundation's Catalyst Fund to provide a dedicated Link Worker specifically working with older people.
- **Family Law Advice** – we work in partnership with GDASS (Gloucester Domestic Abuse Support Service) to provide advice and Mackenzie Friend support for litigants in person dealing with family law issues. We particularly focus on litigants in person who have been victims of domestic abuse.
- **VCSE Locality Lead Partner (Woodspring)** – this role is in partnership with BNSSG ICS, Sirona care and health, Voluntary Action North Somerset and the North Somerset Wellbeing Collective. The purpose of the role is to be an active member of and support the voices of the Woodspring community to be heard on the Integrated Locality Partnerships and to be an active member of the Building Healthier Communities Board and Development Group.

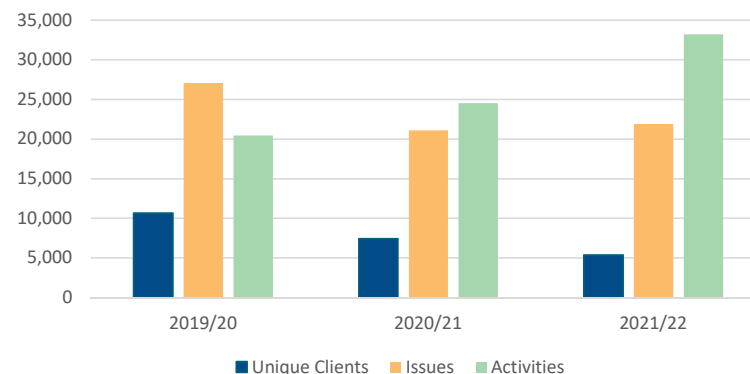
Our services are free, confidential, impartial and non-judgmental

Our Value in 2021-22

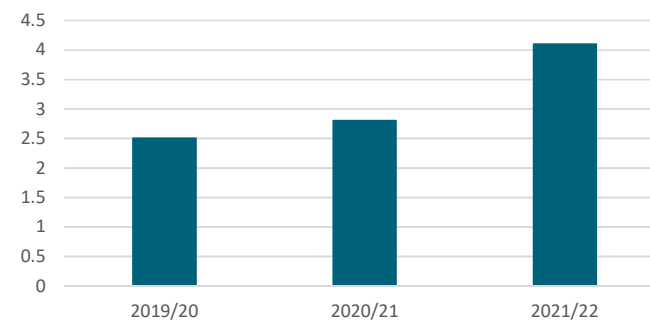
A unique client is only counted once in a reporting period, despite the number of visits. We have seen a fall in unique client numbers in this financial year, but a stark increase in issues, activities and complexity. This is because clients are seeking help with more complex issues requiring multiple visits and more adviser time.

We continue to look at how we can increase capacity further within the funding available to help reach more people and we continue to look for opportunities to expand our in-person advice services, working closely with our community colleagues across North Somerset.

Key Statistics



Complexity Indicator

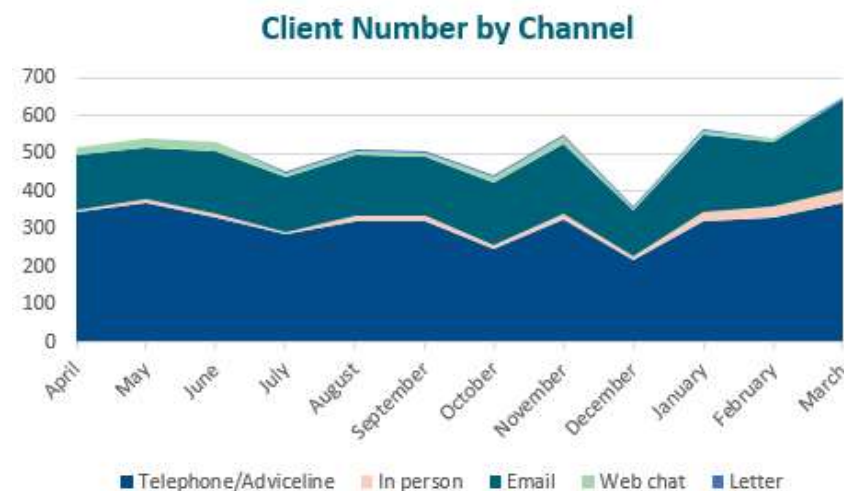


Channels of Advice

In line with the *CANS Future of Advice Strategy*, we aim to develop and grow all our advice channels to provide a seamless client journey. Remote (telephone and email) continues to be the primary channel, however, this year, with the support of our community partners, we have re-introduced more in-person advice and we now hold regular advice sessions in the following locations:



- 65 High Street, Nailsea
- Jobcentre Plus, Castlewood, Clevedon
- The Beacon Centre, Portishead
- 39 Oxford Street, Weston-super-Mare
- The Resource Centre, Pill
- Yatton Library, Yatton
- Banwell Youth & Community Centre
- Winscombe Parish Council Office
- WsM Foodbank, North Street, Weston-super-Mare
- The For All Healthy Living Centre, Lonsdale Avenue (WsM Foodbank)
- Weston General Hospital (Macmillan Cancer Support)
- Weston Court House (Housing Court Possession Desk)



Our Value in 2021-22



Fiscal Benefits

Savings to local and national
Government and public services

£2.4 million



Public Value

Improvements in wellbeing, health,
participation and productivity

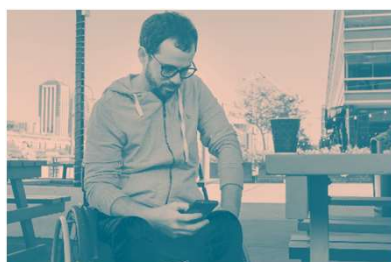
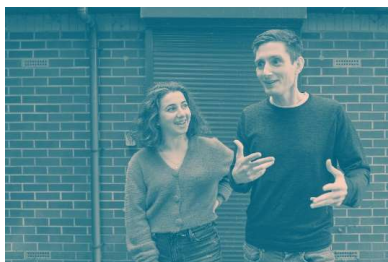
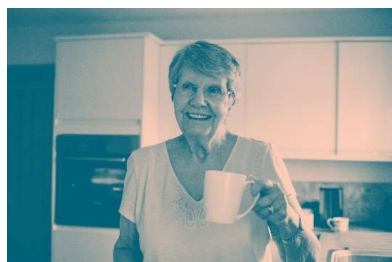
£15.6 million



Value to People

Individual financial Outcomes

£9.2 million



Some feedback from our clients ...

I didn't know where else to turn. Thank you!

We have nothing but praise and admiration for the staff at CANS. They do a wonderful job and they have helped us on several occasions.

They went the extra mile for me.

Without the help of CANS I doubt I'd still be here. The help I received was incredible. I will always be so grateful to have this incredible service to the public.

I suffer with anxiety and depression and I was overwhelmed with all the support CANS gave me. Your team were outstanding from start to end.

The CANS Staff went above and beyond to help. They were very professional and kind and I felt relieved I had someone to turn to.

There are not any words despite being dyslexic but to say thank you for your support.

Helping people today; stopping problems tomorrow. Whoever you are, whatever your problem

Thank you!

To all of our community colleagues, funders, partners and stakeholders for your continued support in Citizens Advice North Somerset.

Our services are free, confidential, impartial and non-judgmental

Citizens Advice North Somerset is the trading name of North Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau
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www.nscab.org.uk

