

Vale Cabinet agenda item 10. July 10th 2020

Some facts about Citizens Advice in Oxfordshire South and Vale

We are a local charity. We are members of national Citizens Advice but raise our core income locally. Our trustees, volunteers and staff all come from the local community.

We provide free advice to the people of Oxfordshire South and Vale. No other organisation helps so many people with so many types of problem.

We help local people. Last year we advised **11,209 people** (V =5,252; S= 5, 957). This is an increase of **30%** over 3 years and represents about **1:12** of all South & Vale households.

We make a difference. We helped **78%** of our clients to resolve their problems and **86%** to find a way forward. **90%** would recommend the service to others

We provide value for money. Our **150** volunteers **in 8** locations are supported by just 12 paid staff. We are lean and efficient. For every £1 spent, we save the public purse £7.00.

Coronavirus

Our staff and 75% of our volunteers have been working from home. They operate our AdviceLine phone service, support clients with debt, benefit claims and appeals and provide IT and administrative support. As a result, we have been able to help **2,346** local people since April, many for the first time. The top 5 issues people bring to us have been (in order): benefits, employment, debt, housing and family/relationships.

Our Abingdon Advice Centre has partially reopened on Mondays and Tuesdays to enable trainee advisers to learn from experienced advisers. We are thinking now about how to re-open safely to the public for face to face appointments.

A **60% increase in debt cases** has been predicted. We are preparing for it.

Our financial situation

Between 2017/18 and 2019/20, we reduced the proportion of our income from district council grant from **75%** to **52%** by winning debt, energy and benefits contracts and securing grants from Town and Parish Councils. We also set up a major donors' project but fundraising events this year have had to be cancelled.

We are grateful to the council for its support. Continued grant aid is vital to us.