

Ms A Greaves
Clerk to Oakham Town Council
Roi House
Long Row
Oakham
Rutland LE15 6LN

06 March 2021

Dear Ms Greaves,

We would like to update you on the work of Citizens Advice Rutland. We aim to ensure that there is equal opportunity for all residents in the county to be able to access the service when they have a need.

During the current pandemic we have transitioned the entire service to telephone, video and email. At the beginning of the first lockdown in March 2020 we dealt with an astonishing 185 calls in the first week post lockdown. As government measures have been introduced such as furlough and ban on evictions the numbers of clients are comparable to previous years.

During 2019/20 we saw over 2,500 unique clients who brought 15,300 different enquiry areas to our service. Approximately 55% of our clients live in the wards and parishes outside Oakham.

50% of the enquires received were regarding Welfare Rights issues and we continue with the Help to Claim Service for Universal Credit which assists clients to apply for this benefit. During the pandemic we have increased our commitment to this Help to Claim Service by providing more resources to the phone and webchat helpline.

Our satisfaction levels remain high and this has particularly been the case during the pandemic with callers expressing their gratitude that we were still providing this valuable service. Two comments may be of interest:

“Thank you, you are the only person that has listened to me and given some good advice”

“I’m so impressed that you are open and can answer my query – you deserve a medal – I mean it!”

Below are some of the key statistics from the last client survey:

- 100% of clients expressed their satisfaction with the Citizens Advice Rutland service.
- 100% of clients would use the service again
- 100% of clients would recommend Citizens Advice to others.

During 2019/20 Citizens Advice Rutland gained approximately £3 million for our clients in benefit gains and debt write offs.

The national Citizens Advice network is anticipating a significant increase in demand for our services. The statistics are stark with the number of people aged 16-64 claiming unemployment related benefits increasing by 120%, with further increases expected once government support schemes end in September this year. Nationally homelessness figures have increased by 70,000 and this number is expected to further rise once the bailiff ban ends. Citizens Advice alone has seen a 25% increase in consultations for divorce compared to a year ago. Mental health has also been affected with the number of adults who reported a clinically significant level of psychological distress increasing to 29.5% in April 2020. As a result, Citizens Advice Rutland are anticipating a significant increase in demand for and our services and are doing what we can to prepare now.

We still very much rely on the support of the Rutland community to enable us to provide our vital services. We hope that you will be in a position to help us again this year in the sound knowledge that every penny donated goes to help our communities.

Should the Council decide that it can support us, our banking details are as follows:

Cheques to be made payable to "Rutland Citizens Advice Bureau"

Payment by online banking to:



Chief Executive Officer