

Our impact in 2017/18

The difference we make to Wales



**citizens
advice**

**The impact of Welsh
local Citizens Advice**

We are Citizens Advice.

Every year thousands of people come to us for help solving their problems.

This means we're an important part of the community, with a credible understanding of local needs.

We use this to tailor our services and help improve local policies and practices.



£27 million

saved by government and public services last year - nearly £2 for every £1 invested in our service

This is Nina

Nina is an example of one of the people we helped.

Last year, we saw 102,000 people with more than 405,000 problems. The biggest issues were benefits and tax credits and debt. Other common issues include financial services and capability; employment and housing.

Nina's story shows how we help people solve their problems, and why this is important.



What we do

We help people with a range of problems including issues with housing, debt, benefits, employment, relationships and consumer rights.

Sometimes people have more than one issue they need help with.



Nina was struggling - she was behind in paying her rent.

The threat of being evicted was making her feel very anxious.

The strain was also aggravating an existing health condition.

How we help



Sam, a volunteer adviser, helped Nina with her problem. He found out she recently had a change in her employment.

This had put added pressure on her finances, which was why she was getting behind on her rent.

People access us our service in different ways: face-to-face, on the phone or by webchat and email.

We can deal with most of the issues people come to us with, tailoring our advice to their needs.



Sam helped Nina write a letter to her landlord and set up a payment plan. This stopped her landlord trying to evict her.

Together, they worked out a budget to help Nina with other debts and maximise her income.

Sam found out Nina was on a flexible hours contract, so he helped her better understand her rights at work.

Our advice is effective

Problems don't happen in isolation and can have a severe consequences. Solving them stops these situations escalating.

We help thousands of people like Nina- 90% say that they couldn't have done it without us.



7 in 10 people
are helped to solve
their problem

The difference this makes

The wider impact of advice - what we achieve as a result of solving problems and providing support - is just as important.

89% say advice made a difference to their lives.



Our advice helped stabilise Nina's financial situation.

Her anxiety reduced, and her physical health improved. She no longer needed additional health services.

She also felt more confident and knowledgeable about handling similar problems in the future.

Our impact



8 in 10 people

felt less stressed,
depressed or anxious



Nearly 1 in 2

had more money or
control of their finances



1 in 2

had a more secure
housing situation



Nearly 3 in 5

felt their physical health
had improved



3 in 10

found it easier to do their
job or find a job



Nearly 3 in 5

felt they had better
relationships with others



2 in 3

found it easier to manage
day-to-day

Why fixing problems matters

If left unsolved, problems don't just affect the individual - they affect this community.

Solving them creates considerable value to society.

- **Over 9 in 10 people** we help say that their problem negatively affected their life
- **1 in 5** didn't feel confident about taking action to resolve their problem before advice
- **1 in 3** come to us when they needed to take action urgently

Our value to society



£27 million

in savings to
government and
public services
(fiscal benefits)

£153 million

in wider economic
and social benefits
(public value)

£234 million

in financial value to
the people we help
(specific outcomes to
individuals)

How we calculate our financial value

It's impossible to put a financial value on everything we do - but where we can, we have.

We've used a Treasury-approved model to do this.

- Keeping people in employment or helping them back to work
- Preventing housing evictions and statutory homelessness
- Reducing demand for mental health and GP services
- Improving mental wellbeing and positive functioning
- Improved family relationships

From our robust management information, we've also separately considered the financial benefits to the people we help.

Our value to this community

Our savings to the public purse include:

£ **£4 million**
saved by local government,
through reducing homelessness

Maximising the income for those we help prevents more costly intervention.

This helps reduce financial difficulty, promotes inclusion and benefits the economy.

This is only one fraction of our true value. We also:

- help clients negotiate local processes, such as welfare reform changes
- help local authority rent and council tax arrears to be rescheduled, and reduce the associated administrative costs

This is Sam

People like Sam give their time, skills and experience to enable us to reach as many people as we do.

There are also has considerable benefits for them too, such as improved employability and increased wellbeing.



