

Our impact in 2019/2020

# The difference we make to Croydon



Croydon

# We are Citizens Advice Croydon

Whoever you are, whatever the problem

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

Citizens Advice is a stronghold in the history of British society and has been a feature of Croydon's high street since 1939. Over the decades, the service has adapted and changed, but has always remained relevant to the advice needs of its population, always being reflective of the societal and economic environment in which people are living.

**£** **£2.5 million**  
saved to government and  
public services last year.  
That's £5.72 for every £1  
invested in our service.

# Our impact in 2019/2020

In March 2020, with the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and first national lockdown, our service offer and ways of working changed profoundly. We had to implement whole scale changes in a matter of days, so that services were offered entirely through online and telephony platforms, and all staff and volunteers moved to home working.



**95% of clients** had a positive experience of our service



**£257,492 saved to the NHS** by reducing client usage of GPs and other services



**£389,324 savings to the local authority** through the prevention of homelessness and housing evictions



**£351,924 value of volunteers** improvements in health, well-being, participation and productivity



**£8.8 milion gains to clients** in one-off and ongoing welfare benefit awards



**£2.5 million managed debt** written off/rescheduled

Being able to respond so quickly to such an unprecedented national event is something we can be rightly proud of. Our service remained accessible and relevant, meeting thousands of enquiries from people about furlough and employment and supporting people to claim Universal Credit, many of whom claimed benefits for the first time.

# 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.

## How we help



**31%**  
face-to-face

People often come to us with multiple or complex problems. We can deal with most of the issues people come to us with, tailoring our advice to their needs.



**36%**  
by telephone

Here's what our clients said about us:

**"An indispensable service"**

**'You are needed for millions of people who need your help!'**



**17%**  
by email

**"Brian helped me tremendously. I would be in a worse position without him and would have had no one else to help me."**

# This is Sarah

Sarah is just one of the people we helped last year. Overall, we helped 7,269 people and dealt with 25,970 different issues.



Sarah was referred to us by a social prescriber as she needed extra support during lockdown. She was unable to work due to poor health and had built up consumer and council tax debt. There was mould in her rented property that the landlord had not dealt with, so she had to move in with a friend.

We advised Sarah to maximise her income by applying for disability benefits and ESA. We also supported her to start tracking her income and expenditure and explained her rights regarding the disrepair of her home.

Sarah was very grateful for our support and we continue to provide ongoing support with benefit claims and debt management.

# Our advice is effective

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



**75% of clients** said their problem was solved following advice



**84% of clients** said we helped them find a way forward

## Why fixing problems matters

If left unsolved, problems don't just affect the individual - they affect the community. Solving them creates considerable value to society.



Poor mental health costs the UK economy between £74 billion and £99 billion a year (Mind)



70 million work days are lost each year due to mental health problems (Mental Health Foundation).

**"Thank you to my adviser. I am less stressed and much calmer now so I able to return to work"**

# Our value to society

For every £1 invested in our service in 2019/2020, we generated:

**£5.72**

in savings to government and public services (fiscal benefits)

**Total: £2.5million**

**£30.14**

in public value (wider economic and social benefits)

**Total: £13.1million**

**£25.42**

in benefits to individuals (value to our clients)

**Total: £11million**

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.

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

# Our value to this community

The value we bring to Croydon isn't just financial. Our work has a significant social impact on people and communities, even more so since moving into lockdown in March 2020.

Reduction in health service and local authority demand

Improved self-esteem and reduced isolation for clients and volunteers

Improved employment prospects and salaries through skills development

# Citizens Advice helps people find a way forward

We provide free, confidential and independent advice to help people overcome their problems. We are a voice for our clients and consumers on the issues that matter to them.

We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment.

We're here for everyone.

[citizensadvicecroydon.org](https://citizensadvicecroydon.org)



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