

## Information About Our Organisation



Citizens Advice South Somerset provides free, impartial, independent and confidential advice to anyone who needs it. We also undertake research and campaigns to improve the policies that affect people's lives

### Our vision

Delivering excellence in prevention and advice services – helping clients prepare for, and manage through, key life events and change in order to improve their independence, prosperity and wellbeing.

### Our Mission

We provide high quality, seamless and responsive services that meet our clients' needs enabling them to act early to avoid a problem escalating and providing advice to achieve effective resolution of the issues that arise in their lives.

We are an independent charity (registration number: 1054134). Our services benefit the whole community and reduce poverty, disadvantage and discrimination by helping people to improve their life chances through resolving their problems. We provide information, and advice on any issue a client presents including; debt, benefits, employment, housing, relationship matters, discrimination, and many more issues. For clients with multiple or complex problems we offer intensive casework support. Our services are delivered with flexibility to make them available to everyone.

Our general service offers open access to information, advice and casework by phone, email or through face to face services at one of our drop-in sessions. We provide drop-in sessions Monday – Friday at a variety of locations in the South Somerset Area. We also offer telephone and email advice services to reach out to those clients unable to travel to our centres.

In addition to the general service we develop and deliver specialist projects and programmes including:

- Welfare Benefits Advice and Casework including for people affected by cancer and other life limiting health conditions
- Money and debt advice/casework for Yarlinton Housing Group's tenants who are in financial difficulties
- Money and debt advice/casework under the MAPS funding in partnership with Talking Money Bristol
- Financial capability and personal budgeting support
- Assist Advice Pathway – recovery focused advice and support for people regaining mental health and wellbeing following a period of ill health /acute care
- Community learning programmes such as financial education
- Energy and household related information and advice to assist householders to maintain a warm and affordable home environment and manage their bills
- Local Assistance administering crisis grants and food parcels for people facing serious emergencies and crisis
- Training and support to local community groups enabling them to provide information assistance within their community of interest

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- Research and campaigning to raise awareness and influence change in respect of policies that have a detrimental impact on people's lives
- Volunteering opportunities in advice giving, campaigning and administration.

We are a volunteer involving organisation with a diverse team of active volunteers. The majority of our general advice service is delivered by people who give their time for free. We provide regular training programmes that enable local people to develop their knowledge and skills and to join our team delivering information and advice to their local community.

We work in close collaboration with the other Somerset advice agencies to research and identify advice or development needs for the communities of Somerset. We work together to promote access to information and advice and to research and campaign on matters in order to improve services for local people. We participate in joint strategic and developmental programmes including the formation and implementation of the Somerset Advice Network and Somerset Advice Strategy.

We employ approximately 20 staff who support and oversee the work of our volunteers (around 48). The staff team is led by our CEO, Angela Kerr, who reports to the Board of Trustees.

Currently we receive funding from a range of sources including South Somerset District Council, Somerset County Council, Yarlinton Housing Group, MacMillan Cancer Support and through smaller grants and donations from Town and Parish Councils, the general public and other charitable trusts.

Our 9 Trustees are representative of the local community and bring a range of special interests and expertise into their role. The Board meet every quarter in the evening and are supported by the finance sub-committee.

The organisation is a registered charity and not for profit company limited by guarantee. We are monitored and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and through the Advice Quality Standard within our membership agreement with National Citizens Advice.