

How We're Helping Local People

In the last year, Citizens Advice helped 6,500 people in the South Hams, saving the NHS £183k through reduced use of health services and saving our local authorities £106k by preventing homelessness.

These fantastic stats are contained in our latest Annual Report, which highlights the impact our service is having at a time of real need in our area.

The report also shows that **58% of the people we helped were disabled, or had a long term health condition and a quarter had a mental health condition.**

EmPower, our dedicated energy project, helped people write-off a total of £93k in energy debts and trained 500 Citizens Advice advisers in specialist energy advice - all led by a specialist team here in the South Hams.

I'm really proud of the work our dedicated team of volunteers and staff do for people in our community who are struggling to cope with a wide range of issues in these difficult times. But we're not complacent and we know there're still many people who will need our help as energy bills rise yet again this winter.

Whenever you may be facing issues in you or your family's life, you can be sure that Citizens Advice is here to help.

JANIE MOOR

Chief Officer

Citizens Advice South Hams

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Fighting for private tenants



Private renters are finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with ever rising rents in the South Hams. That's why Citizens Advice launched a campaign to increase the help tenants get from government to help keep a roof over their heads.

The report - a collaboration with Citizens Advice in Plymouth and Cornwall and the University of Plymouth, included powerful testimonies from local people and new research statistics about the level of support compared to soaring rents.

Following a successful launch event at the university (see photo above), the report was sent to the government, which announced it would lift the three year freeze on housing support in the recent Autumn Statement.

While Citizens Advice South Hams welcomed the move, we'll keep checking how people are coping with rents and carrying out further research into the rental market in our area and how it might be improved.

DO YOU NEED HELP WITH ENERGY BILLS THIS WINTER?



As winter looms, many people are concerned about how they will meet their energy bills as the cost of living crisis continues to bite.

Citizens Advice South Hams is launching a campaign to encourage take-up of the Energy Relief Scheme, which can provide up to £300 towards meeting energy bills for those struggling to pay their supplier.

Chief Executive, Janie Moor, said: “Last year, Citizens Advice offices in Devon helped thousands of people with emergency funds through the fuel voucher scheme. Anyone in arrears, with energy debts or struggling to pay their gas and electricity bills is eligible for help.”

The average energy bill is expected to be around £1,900 this year but the average debt of those who contacted Citizens Advice for help with energy bills so far this year was £1,711.

Citizens Advice South Hams Energy Lead, Aaron Hughes, said: “We would urge people to seek help at an early stage, when they see their bills are going to be unaffordable. No-one should be suffering in the cold at home when help is available.”

The vouchers are being provided as part of the Household Support Fund. South Hams residents can call 0808-278-7948 and ask about the Energy Relief Scheme.

How We Helped Arleen ...

Arleen is a single mum with two teenage sons. Due to poor health she is unable to work and had built-up debt on her electricity account.

Citizens Advice energy advisers supported Arleen with a successful application to the British Gas Energy Trust to clear the debt.

The bulk of her electricity usage was due to her sons' lengthy showers each day. She was shocked and committed to cutting consumption.

Arleen also puts on 10 loads of washing a week due to incontinence issues. She has since managed to reduce the number of loads each week.

In total these changes in energy use have saved her about £400 a year and helped Arleen keep her energy bills at an affordable level.

NB: Name changed to protect the client's identity.

GAMBLE AWARE

The UK has one of the biggest gambling markets in the world, worth more than £14 billion-a-year.

Almost half the population gambles - including sports bets, bingo, lottery tickets and scratch cards.

Across the country around 2 million people experience gambling harm and around 55,000 children are problem gamblers.

People who come to Citizens Advice for support with gambling often also experience problems with debt, housing, mental health, employment, education or family issues.

Whether you need support for yourself or someone else, Citizens Advice can provide free, confidential advice on these issues.

You can also get help to stop gambling by visiting begableaware.org or gamcare.co.uk or speak to a GamCare adviser 24-hours-a-day on freephone 0808-802-0133.

WE WANT YOU!

We're looking for volunteer receptionists to help our advice team at Follaton House, Totnes. No previous experience is necessary and full training is providing. If you'd like to know more, please check out the details on our website at tinyurl.com/j2k5cnp3

South Hams Citizens Advice is registered charity and Company limited by guarantee. Charity registration number: 1091133, VAT number 871725703, Company limited by guarantee. Registered number: 04349641 England, Registered office: Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes TQ9 5EZ

southhamscab.org.uk

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Did you know Citizens Advice South Hams is a local charity?

Although we're part of the national Citizens Advice family, our money comes from local grants which is spent locally helping people in our community.

To help us meet the growing need for our free service, we need to raise funds. If you are part of an organisation which gives grants or raises money, or you'd like to support our work yourself with a donation please consider Citizens Advice. Contact

wailim.wong@southhamscab.org.uk
to see how you could help.

HOW TO GET ADVICE...



0808 278 7948 (freephone)
Monday to Friday
10am to 4pm



Check out information on a wide range of subjects on our **website:**
citizensadvicesouthhams.org.uk



Come and see us
Follaton House, Totnes
Monday to Friday
10am - 1pm, 2pm - 4pm

Weekly outreaches in the market towns

[See our website for details of times and locations](#)