

CITIZENS ADVICE SWINDON

Background notes on the Citizens Advice Service

The Citizens Advice service aims:

- To provide the advice people need for the problems they face.
- To improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

The service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

The Citizens Advice Service works to:

Inform people about the law and how it affects them; about their rights and responsibilities; and about how they may be able to satisfy their needs.

Advise people on the options available to them and on the potential consequences of different courses of action.

Support people as they consider and decide what to do, listening to their concerns and helping them move forward.

Assist people in pursuing their chosen course of action by negotiation, representation and referral to other sources of help needed.

Influence those responsible for policies and services by bringing to their notice the problems people experience and recommending changes.

Citizens Advice Swindon

The bureau was established in 1939 and has served the people of Swindon ever since. June 2014 saw a major move of the bureau from Faringdon Road, where it is believed to have been the home of the Citizens Advice Service since 1939, to Sanford House in Sanford Street. The new site houses many charities including Citizens Advice Swindon, allowing clients to receive many services in one building. This has been an exciting venture and has given many more opportunities for volunteers of Citizens Advice Swindon.

The Citizens Advice Service provides the traditional advice service and also assists visitors with finding information on the services needed for the problems they face.

Outreach services operate in North Swindon at Pinetrees Community centre and in East Swindon in Cavendish Square.

In 2016/17 our service helped clients with 22,424 different issues. The most common issues presented are related to welfare benefits (39%) and debt (18%). We also deal with a large number of employment (7%), housing (7%), relationships (6%) and immigration (7%) issues.

Approximately 23% of our clients are from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. A significant proportion of clients either do not speak English or have English as a second language.

Our service has a dedicated team of 70 plus volunteers who carry out a variety of roles including Trustees, Advisers, Information Guide/Gateway Assessors, Receptionists and Administrators.

The bulk of the funding is provided by Swindon Borough Council through an Advice Services contract. Funding is also received from the Money Advice Service, Macmillan and Thames Water.