

Annual Report

2022/2023

Clackmannanshire Citizens
Advice Bureau Ltd.



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Twin aims of Clackmannanshire CAB:

1) To ensure that individuals do not suffer through lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their needs effectively.

2) To exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Welcome to the Annual Report 2022/23 for the Clackmannanshire Citizens Advice Bureau.

I expect that there are many Chairs of various charities all over Scotland where their opening statement to their Reports will say - this has been a challenging year, and it certainly has.

Just as our organisation was beginning to return to a more normal service following Covid, we have run headlong into the worst cost of living crisis in memory.

In a year of uncertainties, the world around us seems increasingly fragmented and people can become more isolated from their communities.

More and more households, here in our community, have serious problems and issues. Not only ever-increasing energy bills, but challenging employment, benefits, debt, and health issues. Families are being hit harder than ever before, and it is going to get worse before it gets better.

As Chair for our service, I have often thought about why we exist and the answer is simple - to help and advise the people of Clackmannanshire when they most need it, usually at a point of crisis in their lives. That is our core purpose, this is what we do, and being completely biased, that is what we do well.

Our role in that community is more important than ever and this is reflected in the way our staff and volunteers show their commitment to delivering our services.

We have much to be proud of, especially against a backdrop of rapid change and uncertainty, we have continued to be a stable source of advice and reassurance to the people of Clackmannanshire.

In addition to my comments above, this would not have happened if not for our volunteers and our staff, who have delivered an exemplar service, my thanks go out to them all.

We are also extremely grateful to all our funding organisations for their financial support enabling us to deliver an extremely comprehensive range of services, without this support our community would not have had the benefit of these services. Our core funding has also been continued and a special thanks must go to Clackmannanshire Council for their continued support.

I would like to go back to where I began this statement, our core purpose has never and will never change and we believe that we are needed now, more than ever.

It is with regret that this will be my last report as I am resigning to move to pastures new. I would like to say that it has been both a privilege and a pleasure to have been Chair of Clackmannanshire CAB (I have had my eyes opened) and I would like to take this opportunity to give a very special thanks the Board, Jonny, staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders for making this a very special time in my life.



Alex Muirhead
Chairperson



MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

This is the first year since 2019 that we will be having our AGM in person as opposed to Zoom or Teams.

The Bureau itself has been reopening gradually on a face to face basis for 2 years, initially appointments and then drop in services.

Whereas in 2019, we in the space of a week managed to all switch to remote working mainly services were provided by paid staff via telephone and email, the transition back to face to face has been a more gradual process. Many staff and volunteers had not delivered face to face advice before or not for a long time so we had a period of adjustment. I'm pleased to say that, while we still have a substantial amount of telephone, email and webchat queries, we also have a full drop-in service in operation. These services, which run from the main bureau, are complimented by a comprehensive outreach and home visiting service. We now run home visits 3 days per week alongside 5 weekly outreach locations and regular surgeries at Alva and Tullibody health centres.

Over the past 12 months, we have continued to make sure that projects and any development are in line with the needs of the local area, continuing with a high demand for energy advice and an increased need for advice delivery in areas out with our main Alloa office. Issues around benefits and income maximisation continue to be amongst our highest enquiry areas.

While we have brought on a couple of new initiatives, such as SGN energy project and the SafeDeposits Scotland Charitable Trust funded private tenant and landlord project and additional outreach, to meet need and a few smaller social policy and general projects, we have concentrated on staff and volunteer training and consolidation as opposed to development.

We have formed a good number of new partnerships in the past 12 months, assisting in various new locations where the organisations have identified a need for generalist advice to their clients. Locations such as Alva and Tullibody health centre and Yorkshire Building Society have come on board.

The obvious issue which is facing the majority of society is the cost of living crisis. There are not many people who are not affected by either increased energy prices, increased food and fuel costs or mortgage/ interest rate increases. This means that previously manageable debt has become unmanageable and the high rate of inflation across all items means for

many there is no real escape. Wages have not kept pace with rises and this is pushing many people in-to difficulty who haven't previously struggled.

At the AGM in 2019, I mentioned that we were likely to see an increase in middle income households and single working households struggling. This has now become far worse than I imagined, with no support available to many.

While we have brought on a number of short term projects which assist with crisis management, such as fuel vouchers (available for prepayment meter top ups) and food vouchers as alternatives to using foodbanks, these are short term fixes and do not provide a sustainable long term solution. We are actively trying to build in financial education advice, income maximisation, assistance with grants, energy advice and identifying where people can shop around to save money on things like mobile bills, TV and broadband packages.

Although we cannot solve all our clients' issues, without the support of our funders named at the back of this report, we would not even come close. This funding allows the staff and volunteers to continue the exceptional job that they currently do. We don't expect these issues to go away imminently but we will continue to take a flexible approach and through the next year adapt to the challenges which come our way.

I would also like to thank the Board and specifically Alex – our outgoing Chair for all his advice and assistance over the past 12 months. While I would have liked to see him continue for a longer period, I recognise that moving south makes this impossible and we at Clacks CAB wish you the best for the future.

Jonny Miller
Managing Director



GENERAL SERVICES

Who we helped in 2022-2023

Delivery of our general advice service, supported by highly trained staff and volunteers, has returned to pre-pandemic provision with face to face, email, webchat and telephone advice being readily available to our clients. From October 2022 to the end of September 2023 we were contacted **14,648** times by **5,036** clients and gave advice on **35,382** issues.

The way in which clients contact our service has completely changed since the pandemic. Over the past year **74%** of our clients contacted us via telephone, webchat, letter or email and **26%** in person, compared to **31%** and **69%** in 2019/20 (our last “normal” year pre-Covid)

Although Clackmannanshire is a small county, the transport links are very unreliable, and expensive to those on a limited income. It became apparent over recent times that we had a need for more outreach venues throughout the area. This would then allow clients to access our face to face service in different locations as well as the Bureau. Consequently, over the past year **645** clients have accessed our service via the outreach locations and a further **336** clients have benefited from a home visiting service. This face to face service is a vital facility for our clients who are unable, or do not have the skills, to access the service by telephone or email. The times and locations of these venues will be explained further in the report by our Outreach Coordinator.

Financial outcomes for the people we help

No sooner did we think we were returning to some kind of normality following Covid, then we were hit with the cost of living crisis which meant this year has been even more challenging for our staff and volunteers.

At Clacks CAB, we are proud that over the past year we have been able to make a difference to the income of Clackmannanshire residents of over **£4m**.

For many people who turn to us for help, we look at how we can maximise their income by ensuring they are receiving all of the benefits they are entitled to. Those we identified that should be receiving additional benefits, or hadn't received their full entitlement, we've assisted to the sum of over **£3.7m**.

We have been fortunate this year to receive funding from Energy Redress to issue fuel vouchers to clients with prepayment meters, giving additional assistance on top of the energy support made available via the government. As well as the fuel vouchers, our energy project staff assist clients throughout the year with supplier issues and any available grants to clear accrued debts.

During this period, we assisted clients with energy issues and vouchers to the sum of over **£120k**.

In June this year, we received funds from Scottish Government to issue food vouchers, for use at local supermarkets, to clients in a financial crisis. To the end of September, we had issued **892 x £25** vouchers = **£22,300**. This Food Insecurity Fund is due to continue until the end of November. Over the last year, through our Money Talk Plus project, we have assisted with charitable support (food parcels and vouchers) amounting to over **£61k**.

Debt continues to be an issue for many clients, nonetheless we have been able to assist clients by having debts written off by over **£141k**

Over the next year, we will look to overhaul our drop in and triage system, in order to make it a more streamlined experience for our clients. Volunteer receptionists and advisers will take a lead role in developing a new system along with session supervisors.

The cost of living crisis continues to affect many clients and we see daily that debts, in particular rent and council tax arrears, are continuing to rise as clients are avoiding paying these priorities in order to pay for food and energy. It is anticipated that with the eviction ban coming to an end in March 2024, we will see a significant rise in tenants requiring our advice and assistance. The coming 12 months will again prove challenging for us all.

Jane Greig

Deputy Manager

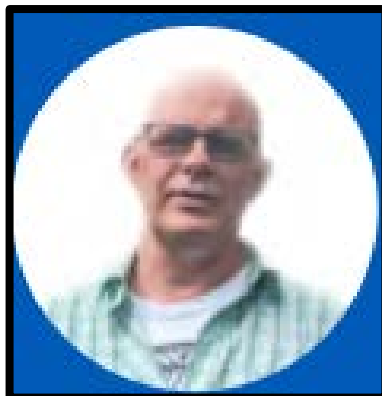
Our Deputy Manager, Jane with the Minister for Housing, Paul McLennan MSP during a visit to the Bureau on the 3rd of August 2023.



THE HENRY SMITH PROJECT WELFARE RIGHTS

For this funding period, the project has assisted 114 clients and created a client financial gain of **£797,419**. This includes benefits such as Adult Disability Benefit, Attendance Allowance, Carers Allowance, Tax Credits, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit.

The project has challenged 133 DWP and Social Security Scotland decisions over the same period and has contributed to 120 decisions overturned in the client's favour. This was achieved with successful Mandatory Reconsiderations/ Redeterminations (38), and Appeals (82) including pre-tribunal decisions. With only 13 cases lost, this has created a success rate of 91%. The project currently has 73 cases ongoing which are in the process of challenging DWP decisions.



Liam Young

Welfare Rights Officer

PRE-EMPLOYABILITY CLACKMANNANSHIRE

We were working for a period of 6 months on a referral basis with Pre-Employability Clackmannanshire. The remit of the project was mainly geared towards clients that were looking at getting back to work in the future, but were currently not able to work due to disabilities or caring responsibilities.

This was a softer focus for clients to look at being assisted with benefit checks, better off in work calculation and all other associated advice and support on a holistic basis from CAB.

CLACKMANNANSHIRE WORKS

We receive referrals from key workers at Clackmannanshire Works, which provides employability programmes to local people, including Fair Start Scotland and Parental Employment Support, Positive Moves & Employment Support Fund. We help clients (1) to understand the implications on their household income of taking up employment or training opportunities through 'better-off-in-work' calculations and (2) to provide money and benefits advice to help them maximise their incomes and reduce outgoings.

The advice we provide aims to give people the confidence and financial security to move into work after periods of unemployment and we have received a lot of positive feedback from key workers and clients. This was initially 3 days per week and has been extended to 6 adviser days per week. Now 3 staff members share the workload.

During the reporting period, our client Financial Gain for this project was **£117,196.**

Denise Armstrong, *Clacks Works adviser*



SPECIALIST & HOUSING DEBT

For this reporting period, the Bureau provided initial debt advice to **1,426** clients through our general services.

214 of these clients, with debts of almost £600k, were referred to the debt team for ongoing specialist advice and assistance. As well as assisting with debt issues, all clients are provided with full income maximisation to identify any unclaimed benefit entitlement and are assisted to navigate the benefits system, if required. Following support with their issues, these clients had a financial gain of over **£141k**. Of these clients, 6 chose MAP bankruptcy and 2 clients had full administration bankruptcy.

A high percentage of the debts are priority, 20% of client's total amount of debt is council tax arrears. Notably higher than rent arrears (15%) and fuel debts (14.5%), this represents a difficulty within our community to manage their council tax arrears and afford their ongoing liability.

We continue to provide support for tenants referred to us from Clackmannanshire Council, with 44 tenants being referred during the year. These clients benefited from a financial gain of over **£25k**.

A partnership with Ochil View Housing Association, which ended in December 2022, saw us improve tenancy sustainment and prevent homelessness for their tenants.



Jade Scott

Generalist Debt Adviser

OUTREACH & HOME VISITS

Due to the rural location of Clackmannanshire, our outreach services are vital in ensuring that those experiencing isolation within our community have access to advice. Overall, these projects contribute to a reduction in isolation, an increase in income and an improvement of health within our local community. For this period, the combined financial gains from the outreach projects have amounted to **£414,839**.

RURAL OUTREACH

The Rural Outreach Service provided home visits to those in need of this service. Referrals were primarily provided by the Carer's Centre, Reachout and other local agencies.

In the period between October and March, the service undertook 151 home visits, 97 outreach drop in's and 172 office-based enquiries. The client gain for the period was **£146,837**.

The project was successful, met all targets and was well received in the community.

The Rural Outreach Service ended in March 2023 and we have a new three-year project which is Lottery Funded to provide rural drop in services across the county.

LOTTERY PROJECT OUTREACH

This project provides drop-in advice sessions at the following locations: Alva, Clackmannan, Tullibody, Menstrie and Dollar. This represents collaborative working between the CAB and the local development trusts. At these locations, we see a significant number of people using the service, who would be less likely to seek advice if they had to come into Alloa. This is mainly due to ill health or costs of public transport, but many just like the ease of access in their local community.

In terms of numbers using the service, Menstrie and Dollar have only recently started up, but in Tullibody and Clackmannan the demand is high. In Alva, we see steady use of the service.

The service is staffed by one full time worker, and the project is tasked to develop a service that is provided by volunteers, this will be the second

phase of the project development, we will start to work on this once we have bedded in the five local rural services.

There have been 392 referrals in to the drop in service, most of the referrals are using our rural services via the local development trusts, with Clackmannan and Tullibody now making up the bulk of the referrals in. 52 people have used the service in Alva, 71 in Clackmannan and 101 in Tullibody.

51 clients who have used the outreach service have financial gains of **£153,545**. We have had 467 client contacts overall, with 703 level 1 advice topics covered and 1103 level 2 codes.

We would like to thank all the local Trusts and volunteers who do so much work in their local communities, for working with us and supporting Clackmannanshire CAB and we thank them for their support in kind, otherwise there would be no rural outreach services, as we would be unable to fund the hiring of local venues.

SGN OUTREACH

SGN Outreach undertook 303 client contacts, primarily via home visits and outreach appointments in GP surgeries (Alva Medical Practice and Tullibody Health Centre). 55 clients achieved financial gains of **£114,457**.

Our Outreach Co-ordinator, William Bell using one of four e-bikes we received following funding from Transport Scotland and Energy Saving Trust



HELP TO CLAIM

Help to Claim is a digital only service which is free, confidential and delivered by Citizen Advice Bureaux in Scotland through a national helpline and web chat platform. Our advisers help clients to make their first claim for Universal Credit (UC) and can support them up to their first full and correct payment.

For this reporting period, our advisers assisted with **1711** client contacts, 11.04% of whom were local residents. UC HTC project does not offer face to face assistance, however alternative access routes via UC national helpline and web chat are available to support clients applying for UC. This provides a step by step guide though the application process. Clients with limited digital skills were identified and provided with the support and referral for telephone claims.

The assistance of our advisers unlocked a known client financial gain of **£1,662,748**, 4.06% of this total was for local clients. A large number of clients had very little confidence completing the application themselves. With encouragement and ongoing support, clients were empowered to maintain their UC account on an ongoing basis.



Sabina Byczkowska
Help to Claim Adviser



Andy Smyth
Help to Claim Adviser



Julie Tracey
Help to Claim Adviser

ENERGY PROJECTS

LOCAL ENERGY ADVICE PROJECT

In the last 5 months of the project, we supported 145 households with energy advice. This included providing information on energy use/bills, resolving issues with suppliers, as well as advising on the cost of living increases/payments and energy debt.

The impact of the cost of living crisis meant that we saw an increase in clients who were previously managing their fuel costs. The project saw an increase in clients presenting with fuel debts, due to struggling with the rapid rise in energy bills. The reported financial gain within the last 5 months of the project was **£56,285**. This is made up of fuel vouchers, energy debt grants and various applications for benefits.

The project helped raise awareness about all energy matters and energy assistance available, as well as discussing what other advice CAB provide, by delivering online and face-to-face group talks to local organisations.

SAFE AND WARM ADVICE SERVICE

Funded by SGN, this energy project has a particular emphasis on Carbon Monoxide safety issues. For this reporting period, this service has assisted **236** clients and created a known financial gain of **£62,956**. In addition, 17 alarms were gifted to homeowners who did not have a functioning alarm in a room with a potential CO source.

In addition, this service provides group sessions for frontline workers and consumers within the community. Over this period, 13 sessions have been completed for groups including Clackmannanshire Council Justice Team, Clacks and Stirling Health and Care Partnership, Forth Valley Men's Shed, Central Scotland Regional Equalities Council. These sessions involved 91 consumers and 53 frontline workers. During these sessions, 29 CO alarms were gifted to homeowners who were identified as requiring one.

"A very well-presented session which was highly informative and provided practical advice on seeking relevant support for workers and service users."

Feedback from a Safe and Warm Session

ENERGY BEST DEAL

The remit of this Project was to provide clients with energy saving and supporting advice via 1-2-1 sessions and group talks, to frontline workers and consumers in the local community. This also extended to more complex follow up work from the energy team that included speaking with suppliers on client's behalf in relations to other issues such as debt and complaints with their supply. As you can imagine, this branched out into holistic advice that included income maximisation and money advice.

We also supported a large number of clients who engaged with this project to obtain funding and support from grants to assist them with their rising energy costs.

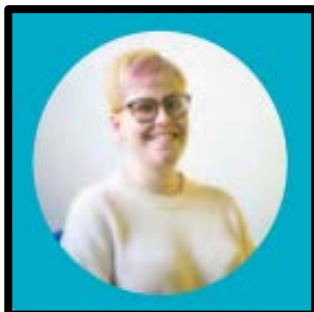
During the project for 2022-23, Clackmannanshire CAB provided clients with 353 1-2-1 face to face sessions and gave group talks to 12 groups of 8 frontline workers & consumers. For this reporting period, our client Financial Gain for this project was **£13,178**.

BIG ENERGY SAVING NETWORK

The remit of this Project was to provide clients with Energy Saving and supporting advice via 1-2-1 sessions and group talks, to frontline workers and consumers in the local community.

During the project for 2022- 23 Clackmannanshire CAB provided clients with 95 1-2-1 face to face sessions and gave group talks to 75 frontline workers & consumers.

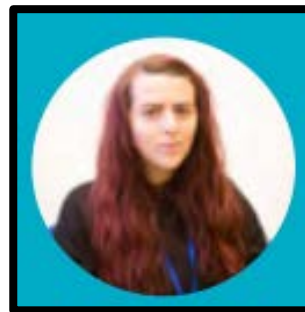
Between the dates of 01.10.22 to 30.09.23 our client Financial Gain for this project was **£5,950**.



Kirsty Davies



Denise Armstrong



Edana O'Donnell

Energy Advisers

PATIENT ADVICE & SUPPORT SERVICE

Over this reporting period, 410 clients were assisted on the PASS project across the Forth Valley.

PASS has been a steadily busy project. The Level 1 Advice Code was predominantly NHS Concerns or Complaints at 90.77%.

Of these concerns and complaints, clients were further advised (Level 2 Advice Code) on the following (top 5 selected) Note, clients can be advised on multiple issues:

- Clinical treatment – all aspects (52%)
- Access to GP/Dentist (30%)
- NHS staff, including staff attitude, behaviour, competence, communication and shortage (18%)
- Personal records (12%)
- Complaint handling (10%)



Lesley Cole
PASS adviser



Maggie Magor
PASS adviser

YORKSHIRE BUILDING SOCIETY

The YBS Referral Service Partnership went live for 9 months on 4th July 2023. This consists of 3 weekly appointments on Tuesdays, where clients are able to receive general advice from the adviser. Clients contact YBS Alloa Branch to initially book an appointment time of 10, 11 or 12pm, giving their name and contact number. Clients are then triaged and confidentially advised, as they would be in the Bureau.

If any appointment times are free weekly, we are able to backfill with our clients from the Bureau. Clients do not have to be YBS customers to use this service, although so far all appointments booked through YBS have tended to be.

The response to the project has been very positive from both clients and staff members in YBS. The YBS branch have been delighted with our ability to be flexible and to backfill appointment times meaning all appointments are filled weekly. Our worker has been able to strike up a good working relationship with the YBS team and advise from a confidential room within the branch.

Jess McGinley, *Generalist Adviser* at the Alloa branch of YBS



PRIVATE SECTOR ADVICE & MEDIATION PROJECT

Following funding from SafeDeposits Scotland Charitable Trust, the project commenced on the 11th of September 2023. To date, this project has assisted 16 clients and created a financial gain of **£6,300**. This includes benefit claims for Universal Credit and Best Start Grants (Early Learning Payment and School Age Payment). In addition, this includes support with council tax arrears, rent arrears and food insecurity.

Good progress has been made on advertising and attracting landlords and private sector tenants to the project. Promotional material was designed, printed and distributed throughout various local groups/organisations such as: Alloa First, Homestart, Clackmannanshire Council Housing Services, local shops and charities. The project adviser has attended 3 events: Breathe Easy, Glenochil Prison Wellness day (for staff) and a stall at Forces day in Alloa town centre where either a presentation about the project was given or promotional material handed out.

A Landlords Forum is scheduled to take place 30 November and a good response has been received from the 1,295 landlords contacted by Clackmannanshire Council's landlord registration team. To date, over 30 landlords have shown interest in participating. A survey of topics for discussion is currently being drawn up to be distributed to landlords to gauge most pertinent areas for discussion at Forum.



Pauline Thomson

Private Rented Housing Adviser



CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROJECT

Clackmannanshire CAB's Criminal Justice Project continued to provide a free and confidential advice service to men and women within the justice system who were serving all or part of their sentence in the community. Having a dedicated CAB adviser working in partnership with Criminal Justice Workers had consistently helped to improve access to advice for individuals in urgent need. In addition, this addressed the issue of inconsistent engagement with voluntary services, as targeted referrals could be made directly to the CAB Criminal Justice Project Worker. Individuals could then be internally referred on to other specialist services offered by the CAB, if required. For example, for advice on resolving more complex debt problems or for representation at benefit appeals. The project came to an end on the 31st of March 2023.

From the 1st of October 2022 to 31st March 2023, Criminal Justice advisers received 55 referrals in total: from Criminal Justice staff, CAB colleagues and other agencies. This included 22 self-referrals and 2 referrals made by SACRO. The advice and assistance provided by the project produced positive outcomes in the form of successful benefit claims and challenges, better debt management and emergency financial assistance. The overall aim was to mitigate some of the issues that contribute to people re-offending. These positive outcomes helped to put **£17,372** back into the community in client financial gains (automatic entitlement).

The majority of advice codes areas were for Benefits (64.41 %), Housing (15.25%) and Finance and Charitable support (10.17%) and also debt (3.39%).



Sabina Byczkowska
Criminal Justice Worker

SOCIAL POLICY & CAMPAIGNS

Over the last year the Bureau has undertaken a range of social policy work. We continue to receive social policy feedback on cases from advisers, which allows us to identify any issues facing the community and pursue further action by submitting cases to CAS. This in turn allows us to assist our clients further. As well as gathering feedback from advisers, we have also completed multiple projects and reports over the last year.

At the start of 2023, we carried out the Equality of Access project, which looked at barriers facing people in Clackmannanshire with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 when it came to accessing the bureau and its services. The project ran from January to April 2023 and over the course of this we worked with both our clients, partner organisations, staff and volunteers to identify any issues which may be affecting the service our clients receive. We consulted with a total of 47 participants over the course of this project, and their feedback fed into an assessment on the accessibility of the Bureau. The report was completed in April and was shared on our website and social media.

Following the completion of the Local Energy Advice Project (LEAP), a second social policy report was completed in July 2023 based on the findings of the project from 2021 to 2023. The project aimed to address fuel poverty rates in Clackmannanshire, as these are above the national average for Scotland (27% of households compared to 25%). The report looked at a range of matters such as the risk factors contributing to fuel poverty, how suppliers can better support their consumers and how the LEAP project had helped to address fuel poverty rates in Clackmannanshire. The project was highly successful and saw a total of **1708** households with financial gains of **£217,867**. The completed report was published to the bureau's website and social media. Following this, the Alloa Advertiser published an article about the project's success and the findings of the report.

More recently the Bureau worked alongside Citizens Advice Scotland as part of the 2023-24 Energy Co-Design. This involved holding multiple focus groups where we consulted with participants on their views of the current energy crisis and their knowledge of the various support schemes available to them. Participants were also asked to give their opinions on last year's campaign materials and what they would like to see in future campaigns. The findings from these focus groups were then sent over to Citizens Advice Scotland to assist with the development of this year's energy saving

winter campaign, with the campaign materials due to be published at the start of November this year.



Amy Rankin
Social Policy Worker



VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

We have structured our training programme even more within the Bureau this year to include the support of CAB Network Training Project. This has allowed us to increase our ongoing support through training and one to one assistance to existing volunteer advisers and our trainees.

We continue to campaign for volunteers, still focusing on service users through social media channel, local recruitment fayres and strong partnerships with Clacks works and CTSI – who have helped us enormously in this year's recruitment. So far this year we have recruited 11 more volunteers with another 3 due to start in November.

Our team were delighted to attend CTSI's Volunteer Awards Ceremony on Wednesday 7th of June at the Alva Cochrane Hall. We were nominated for two awards:

- *Young Person of the Year (Amy, Hayley and Zoe)*
- *Community Group of the Year*

We were immensely proud that our amazing volunteers were recognised for their hard work providing advice and support to those within our local community.



VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

“Through Clacks Works, I have volunteered for Clacks CAB for 6 months. I chose to volunteer, as I wanted to gain some work experience and new skills. It’s a great pleasure to work here, as all the staff are lovely. This makes for a nice working environment. I enjoy that we are here to help the public and that every day is different. Some days can be more challenging than others but that’s the great part of the job. I have been lucky enough to have now been given the opportunity of some paid work within the Bureau, which I am really looking forward to. This would not have been possible without the support and encouragement that I have been given at the Bureau.”

JAMES’ TO - DO LIST

- 9.30am - Open drop-in and telephones for enquiries*
- 10.30am - Make a coffee*
- 12.30pm - Admin duties*
- 1.30pm - Check mail*
- 2.30pm - Drop in closes*
- 3.30pm- Finish for the day*



James Hesketh
Receptionist/Administrator



THE FUTURE

Sometimes it's useful to look back before looking forward and I feel in the case of Clacks CAB this is particularly relevant.

When I came into post 8 years ago, the Bureau was not in the best of health in many ways, it wasn't felt as if the organisation was working with partners. The small staff team had low morale, we had only 1 project and were to all intents and purposes firefighting. There almost wasn't enough money in the bank to pay salaries and despite the best efforts of a handful of staff and volunteers, the organisation did not come close to addressing the needs of the local population.

Over time, we have successfully built up additional projects from financial education, outreach and home visiting services, welfare rights representation and specialist housing projects, help to claim services and many others. On average, we have 15-18 running at any one time, with around 21 different ones running in any one year.

We have achieved top accreditation in Scottish National standards Type iii in Housing, Money advice and Welfare Benefits.

Our staff team now number around the 30 mark with around 25 volunteers, and we now deal with around **34,000** issues each year. This is up from around **11,000** around 6 years ago.

As opposed to crisis intervention, our Bureau has very much focused on early intervention and prevention. Projects such as our housing projects try to resolve issues before they become eviction cases, by looking at the individual's circumstances as a whole to find a solution and enabling the individuals to be involved in the solution. This not only assists with preventing reoccurring issues but allows the clients to take control back and retain ownership of the situation.

Our staff and volunteers should be extremely proud of the work that they have been involved in assisting the Bureau to grow and develop. The Board are extremely proud at the fact that everyone works hard and towards a common goal – to provide the best possible service that we can in a structured and proactive manner.

We are now focusing on ensuring that the service we provide is constantly improving and that staff and volunteers are fully upskilled and prepared for any future developments.

Over the coming months, we will launch a dedicated telephone advice line which will be managed by volunteers while being supported by an experienced adviser.

Increased support for advisors dealing with drop in, telephone or appointments is in progress of being implemented. We have plans to streamline our telephone advice services during the next few months.

We are always in need of more volunteers to train to assist with what continues to be an ever-growing demand.

It is unlikely that any major new services will come on in the next 12 months it's all about ensuring that the ones we currently provide are developed and maintained...

But you never can tell!

Jonny Miller

Managing Director



THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

We would like to thank our funders for their continued support, without which we would have been unable to deliver the work detailed in this report and the associated positive change in the community.

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- Scottish Government
- Criminal Justice, Clackmannanshire Council
- Energy Savings Trust Energy Redress Scheme
- The Robertson Trust
- The Bank of Scotland Foundation
- The National Lottery Community Fund Scotland
- The Henry Smith Charity
- Clacks Works, Clackmannanshire Council
- SafeDeposits Scotland Charitable Trust
- SGN
- NHS Forth Valley
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- Yorkshire Building Society
- Ochil View Housing Association



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