

Annual Report 2024/25



Barnsley



Here to help everyone

Welcome from the Chair of Trustees



I hope you discover, in this year's report, how Citizens Advice Barnsley works in and with communities across our town. We believe in taking our services to where people live and feel most comfortable. We currently collaborate with community organisations, BMBC and Yorkshire Building Society to offer information, advice and support.

We reach people and families through community organisations and trusted partners. Our energy advice and digital skills teams actively engage with older people's and family groups, as well as GPs to help as many people as possible. Our advisers often find that individuals have several challenges in their lives; by working together we support, sign-post and help resolve difficulties, in one community location.

**We are a
local service.
Serving local people
and communities
is our key
purpose.**

Our staff and volunteers work hard to stay updated with information and legislation, so that guidance is accurate and timely. Our Trustees give time to strategic decision-making and uphold our charitable purposes; they bring different skills, experiences and knowledge to assist our service. Friends of CAB bring local links and insights, without which our services would be less effective.

This report shines a light on the vital services offered to everyone in our town and communities. We thank everyone involved!

Dr Janine Eldred, Chair of Trustees

Welcome from the Chief Executive

This year as a local charity, we have focused on expanding our community engagement and holistic support. We are here to ensure that people in Barnsley have the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are and whatever their problem.

Our advice is quality marked and audited. We are accredited by the Advice Quality Standard (AQS), the National Citizens Advice Performance and Quality Framework, and authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

A big thank you to all of our funders throughout the year. The funding has helped us to reach more people in the community, including people that have never accessed our services before.

We have used evidence brought to us by our clients to campaign to challenge unfair policies and procedures that impact on local people. The evidence that we have gathered has mainly been related to cost of living issues such as food poverty, Universal Credit, fuel bills/prices and the need for charitable support.

We are excited to be starting new services during 2025-26, which will enable us to support even more local people!

Jo Clark, Chief Executive Officer



**Huge
thanks to our
trustees, volunteers
and paid staff for
their continued
commitment to
our clients and
service.**

We are Citizens Advice Barnsley

As an independent, local charity, we have been supporting people living in Barnsley for more than 60 years.

We provide the advice people need for the issues they face, both from our town centre premises and from many other community settings throughout the borough.

Our advice is free, confidential and impartial and can be accessed through a variety of different channels including face-to-face drop-in advice sessions, in-person appointments and by telephone, video and email.

We help with many things, such as managing debt and money worries, claiming universal credit and other benefits, as well as housing, employment and energy issues. We can also help to improve digital skills and give access to digital equipment, data and emergency household support.

We source external funding to support the running of our services and to deliver specific projects.



In 2024/25 we received funding for
25
different projects or activities!

The Impact of our Advice Services

Between April 2024 and March 2025, we helped **6,155** people with **20,532** different issues. That's an average of **3.3** issues per client.

Top 5 issues

Debt	6,307
Benefits and Tax Credits	3,698
Housing	1,969
Universal Credit	1,899
Charitable Support & Foodbanks	944

Supporting local people with their debt and benefits issues continues to be a significant amount of the work we do.

Improving financial circumstances has such a big impact on people's health and well-being, reducing stress and anxiety, and helping to improve quality of life.

We helped people claim over
£1.1 million
in Universal Credit
and other
benefits!

We helped people manage over
£10.1 million
of problem debt!

How people access our Advice Services

We aim to make it as easy as possible for local people to get advice, so we continue to offer Barnsley residents a variety of different channels to access our services.

While a lot of the work we do is actioned through telephone and email, we are committed to providing face-to-face delivery of our services in accessible community venues, so that vulnerable people across Barnsley can access in-person advice to help with their problems.

“I couldn't sleep and was very stressed with the overwhelming information but I feel better for seeing someone face to face and getting the assistance I needed.”

In 2024/25
we made
3,713
face-to-face contacts
with clients.

In 2024/25
46%
of contacts with
clients were
via email.

We delivered
an average of
100
community based drop-in advice
sessions per month from
20
different venues all
across Barnsley.

Evaluation of our Services

Each year, we ask people accessing our services to give feedback about their experiences.



“I felt like I was listened to and advised respectfully. It gave me a little beacon of light.”

99% felt the service they received was good or excellent.

99% said they would use the service again.

99% said they would recommend our service to someone else.

93% felt less stressed or anxious after seeing the adviser.

87% thought their health and wellbeing would improve as a result of seeing the adviser.

85% felt more able to manage their own affairs.

Our Community Projects

Over the last year we have received funding for a number of new projects that has given us even more opportunity to work in the community - attending events, delivering workshops and hosting training courses.

This has helped raise awareness of our organisation, and allowed us to engage with clients who might have found it difficult to use our existing advice services.

Many of the people we help face multiple, interlinked issues. By referring into our other internal projects, we have been able to work together to help clients to resolve their problems.

“A lady came to give us a talk which was very useful. This is where I got information from for opening hours and areas... I wouldn't have known if we hadn't had the speaker at our group.”

We attended
56
Community Events.

B.E.A.T
has supported
196
people with light-touch energy advice at community events.

We delivered
12
digital skills courses to a total of
59
learners.

Our Community Projects (continued)

Here's some of the new projects and services that started delivery in the last year:

As well as delivering a weekly drop-in advice service from our town centre venue, the **Barnsley Energy Advice and Training Project (B.E.A.T)** also attends community events and support groups across Barnsley to provide light touch energy advice. We can help people with all of their energy related problems including debt, billing issues, finding the best tariff and switching suppliers.



The **Beyond Crisis Project** supports vulnerable people who have experienced a crisis or significant change in circumstance and are looking for help to rebuild their lives. We work in partnership with four local organisations to accept direct referrals of clients who would otherwise find it difficult to engage with our existing services. The project is able to offer in-depth, long-term, specialist debt and benefits support to help navigate people towards a brighter future.

Launching the **Digital Inclusion Project** has helped us to reach so many people! We've attended community events, delivered digital skills training courses, offered one-to-one digital advice appointments and provided FREE data and devices. We've enabled digitally excluded residents - who previously might have missed out on vital information - to learn new skills, build confidence, and engage positively with local and national online services.



Holistic Support - Gillian's Story

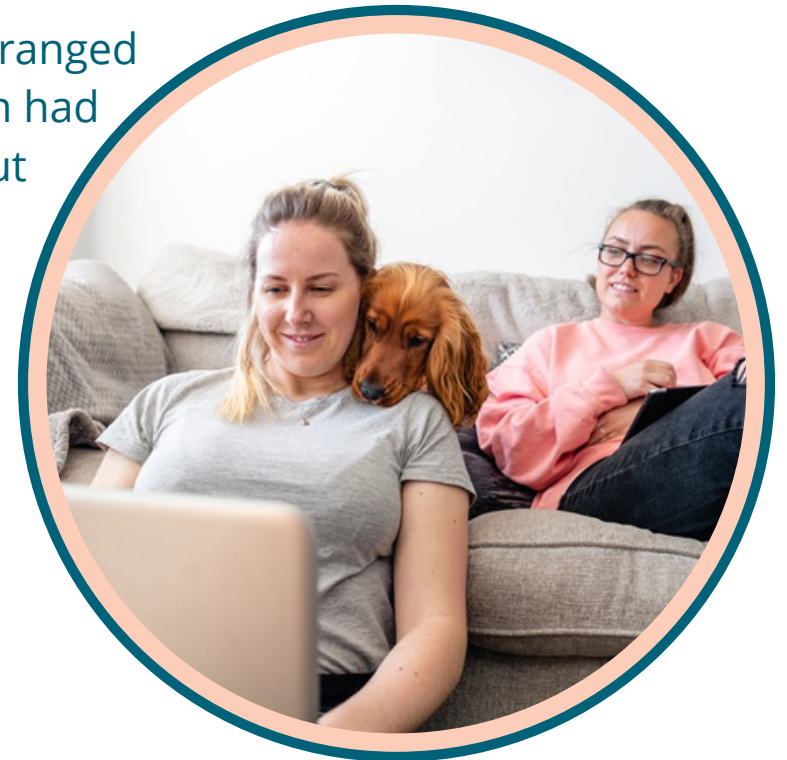
Gillian* was initially referred to Citizens Advice Barnsley for a benefits check. She had recently started part time work but was anxious about it having a negative impact on her housing benefit. She was struggling to pay her bills, rent and utilities and found paperwork difficult, and relied on a family member to help her.

As it was extremely difficult for Gillian to travel for an appointment, our adviser scheduled a home visit. Once there, she checked Gillian's financial status, carried out a benefits check and completed an application with her for a Discretionary Housing Payment. Our adviser also checked Gillian's Council Tax was up to date and issued her with an emergency shopping voucher to provide immediate support to help her pay for food.

As Gillian was also worried about her utility bills, the adviser arranged for one of our B.E.A.T energy team to make a home visit. Gillian had smart meters and had been on a prepayment arrangement. But as a result of the energy adviser's visit, she was able to change onto a cheaper tariff paid by Direct Debit, which would benefit her significantly going forward. She was also issued with a fuel voucher, to help pay her immediate energy costs.

Gillian's story is a prime example of the multiple, interlinked issues people face and how our projects can work together to provide wrap-around support.

* Client Storytellers have been given different names and certain details have been omitted or changed to preserve their anonymity.



Ways to Access our Advice Services

FACE-TO-FACE:

One-to-one, in-person advice is available at community venues across Barnsley. For full details, please go to <https://barnsleycab.org.uk/get-advice/>

EMAIL:

barnsleycab.org.uk/get-advice/

Fill out the online contact form to receive a response via email. (Usually within 2 working days - however, at busy times this may take slightly longer.)

TELEPHONE HELPLINE:

0800 144 8848

Adviceline is free and is usually available 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. It's not available on public holidays. It's usually busiest at the beginning of the day.

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE:

Deaf clients who require BSL interpretation can drop in to Wellington House to receive face-to-face advice between 10am and 12 noon every Tuesday and Wednesday.

WEBCHAT:

Available for selected topics from the Citizens Advice website: citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/information/chat-with-an-adviser-online/

ONLINE ADVICE:

Self help information and advice can be found on our website: barnsleycab.org.uk/

Other Specialist Citizens Advice Services

UNIVERSAL CREDIT: 0800 144 8 444

Help to Claim advisers can help you with the early stages of your Universal Credit claim. Available 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

DEBT: 0800 240 4420

If you're worried about money or debt, call the debt helpline. Available 9am to 8pm, Monday to Friday and 9.30am to 1pm Saturday.

PENSION WISE: 0800 138 3944

Book an appointment with a pension specialist to talk through your pension options. Available 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

CONSUMER HELPLINE: 0808 223 1133

If you need more help with a consumer problem. Available 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.



“[The adviser] went to great lengths to reassure me, which made me feel less stressed with the situation.”

Quality and Assurance

Quality of Advice

Our organisation is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

All staff carry out Part 1 of the 'Senior Managers and Certification Regime' to understand and comply with the FCA rules of conduct. Senior Managers, Trustees and all debt workers undergo further training to comply with Consumer Duty regulations.

We are regularly audited as part of our membership of Citizens Advice through the Citizens Advice Performance Quality Framework. Our latest Leadership and Management Assessment gave us top grades in all areas.

Information Assurance

Our trustee board oversees the information security of all personal information of our clients, staff, funders and strategic partners that we process.

We hold joint responsibility for client data that is held in our case management system, with the national Citizens Advice Service.

Our information assurance team ensures the confidentiality, integrity and availability of all personal and sensitive data is maintained to a level which is compliant with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.



**All paid
and volunteer
advice staff are
trained to AQS
Advice Quality
Standard.**

**We also
have the AQS
Telephone Advice
Standard and the
Debt Casework
Standard.**

Support Our Charity



We've registered Citizens Advice Barnsley with #easyfundraising, which means over 4,000 shops and sites will now donate to us for FREE every time you use #easyfundraising to shop with them.

These donations help SO MUCH, so please sign up to support us! It's completely FREE and doesn't take long.

**You can
also make
one-off
donations!**



Scan the QR code to sign up and start supporting us today!



Work for us

We're always looking for more funding and when new projects start we often need to recruit paid staff!

Our organisation is friendly and supportive. All staff receive in-depth training relevant to their role, and ongoing supervision.

We belong to both the Mindful Employer and Disability Confident Schemes and have trained First Aiders, Mental Health First Aiders and Menopause Advocates in our team.

We also have a generous staff benefits package including:

- 32 days holiday, pro rata (plus public holidays)
- Hybrid/Flexible Working Options
- 5% Employer's Matching Pension



For current vacancies visit: barnsleycab.org.uk/jobs/

Become a Volunteer

We couldn't run any of our projects or services without our wonderful team of volunteers!

They contribute to achieving the aims of our organisation in many ways, by fulfilling a variety of different roles - including Advisers, Information Assistants, Receptionists and Administrators.

We support our volunteers to learn new skills, meet new people and most of all, feel like they are making a difference!

We accept new volunteer applications all year round...

We offer full training and support, and paid travel expenses.

More information about our volunteering vacancies can be found on our website: **barnsleycab.org.uk/volunteering/**



Become a Friend of CAB

We are seeking individuals and organisations who want to become a Friend of Citizens Advice Barnsley.

**Becoming
a Friend of
Citizens Advice
Barnsley
is FREE!**

As our Friend, you'll receive occasional updates about the work we do and the impact it has on the people we help, opportunities to network with our other friends, as well as an invitation to our annual event.

In return, we hope you will support our charity by signposting our services to people who may need help, assisting us with research, and sharing any opportunities to develop new projects or gain alternative funding.

Friends of CAB include:

Abbie Churchill	Dave Fullen	Jen Macphail	Philip Michael Watson
Andrea Spencer	David Hawkins	Kayleigh Wake	Rudo Mkumba
Barry Eldred DL	Fiona Catherine Murphy	Lorna Lewis	Ruth Elizabeth Willis
Brenda Wade	Ian Guest	Luisa Golob	Suzanne Storey
Claire Meager	Janine Eldred	Norah Gregory	Tracy Bryant

**For more information about becoming a Friend, please visit our website:
barnsleycab.org.uk/friends/**

With thanks to our Team

A great big thank you to all our staff, volunteers and trustees who have contributed so much time and energy to help to support the people of Barnsley. We really couldn't do it without you!

In 2024/25 we worked with many staff and volunteers including:

Paid Staff

Abbie Turner	Karol Block
Abu Ferdoush	Kyle Turner
Adam Roznowski	Laura Smith
Alison Bailey	Lauren Matthews
Amy Hammond	Leanne Hopkin
Amy Morris	Linda Rayner
Amy Pearson	Lynda Carey
Becky Taylor	Lyndsey Saunders
Christopher Rock	Ray Irwin
Danielle Joseph	Richard Hodgkinson
David Andy	Sarah Peacock
Elisabeth Evans	Sharon Draper
Emily-Jane Stott	Simon Hickson
Helen Corker	Sue Shipton
Jo Clark	Toni O'Neill
John Ball	Tracey Thompson-Burrell

CAB Trustees

Dr Jan Eldred: Chair
Adam Leece: Vice Chair
Alan Methley
Cllr Joe Hayward
Frank Parnham
Linda Burgess
Marie Hoyle
Rachael Burley
Sarah Poolman

Volunteers

Amelia Kuritzin
Kathy Cunningham
Linda Rayner
Martyn Cooper
Neil Crosswaite
Renee Smith

With thanks to Our Funders

Without the generous support of our funders, we wouldn't be able deliver any of our activities or services.

During 2024-25 their funding contributed to:

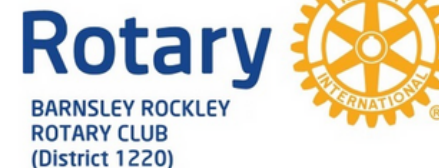
Community Outreach Advice
Community Engagement
Core Running Costs
Digital Skills Training
Distribution of Data and Devices
Energy Advice
Provision of a BSL Interpreter
Shopping Voucher Distribution
Specialist Benefits Advice
Specialist Debt Advice
Telephone and Email Advice



Free for everyone,
finding you a way forward at



Three Guineas



North Area Council
Darton East, Darton West, Old Town, St Helens

Penistone Area Council
Penistone East, Penistone West

South Area Council
Darfield, Hoyland Milton, Rockingham, Wombwell

Central Area Council
Central, Dodworth, Kingstone, Stairfoot, Worsbrough

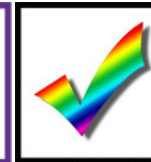
**Barnsley and District
Citizens Advice Bureau
1st Floor, Wellington House
36 Wellington Street
Barnsley
S70 1WA**



www.facebook.com/barnsleycab/



[instagram.com/barnsleycab](https://www.instagram.com/barnsleycab)



Citizens Advice Barnsley is a Hate Crime Reporting Centre

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