

Annual Report 2025/26



Making a Real Difference



Welcome from the Chair of Trustees



It is my privilege, as Chair of the Board of Trustees at Citizens Advice Barnsley, to see the knowledge, skills, care and compassion at work in our local service.

Paid staff and volunteers ensure the people of Barnsley, regardless of where they live and what challenges they face, receive the best possible advice, information and guidance.

But don't take my word for it! The Leadership and Management Assessment, held in February 2026 by national assessors, judged our service to be **outstanding in all areas**. This is testimony to the teamwork and dedication of everyone involved.

Of course, Trustees are also volunteers, bringing a wide range of skills and experience, to help guide the strategic direction of the service.

This year, the Board has grown, with more local people willing to serve. To all these people I offer sincere thanks.

Also this year, we said 'farewell' to our CEO of over 10 years, Jo Clark. Jo has guided our Barnsley charity from a rather vulnerable organisation to being a strong, diverse, highly successful service with over £1m turnover. We say a huge thanks to Jo for her meticulous, detailed way of running and supporting the organisation, ensuring growth and recognised success.

We welcome Laura Smith as her successor. We pledge our support to Laura, with great confidence that she will build on the legacy and shape it for the present and future... The people of Barnsley deserve no less.

Dr Janine Eldred, Chair of Trustees

**Citizens
Advice Barnsley
is outstanding
in all areas,
thanks to great
teamwork!**

Welcome from the Chief Executive

After many years helping to create these annual reports it's my absolute honour to be taking over as Chief Executive and writing my own welcome!

As we look back over the achievements of the last year I want to say a big thank you to Jo Clark for her excellent leadership in the 10 years she was here as CEO. Under her guidance Citizens Advice Barnsley has grown to be an integral part of the local community, delivering information, advice and guidance services to people all over Barnsley.

We're here to **give people the knowledge and confidence they need** to find their way forward - whoever they are, and whatever their problem. But the support we provide extends beyond the advice services we are known for.



**Thanks to
staff, volunteers
and trustees for
your support and
dedication. You
really make a
difference!**

Over the last year we have contributed to research and campaigns to challenge unfair policies and procedures that impact local people; have delivered Digital Skills training courses; have provided access to food parcels, shopping vouchers and fuel vouchers to support people in crisis; and provided training and development opportunities to 26 volunteers and student placements.

As a local, independent charity we are unable to provide any of those services without external funding and the support of community partners - so a big thank you goes out to everyone who has supported us over the last year.

I'm so excited to see what 2026/27 has in store!

Laura Smith, Chief Executive Officer

Supporting the Local Community

Citizens Advice Barnsley (CAB) is an independent local charity. We have been providing advice services to people living in Barnsley and the surrounding areas since 1964. Our staff and volunteers provide information and advice that is free, confidential and impartial - on all of the issues that people face.

We help with many different problems - such as managing debt and money worries, claiming Universal Credit and other benefits, as well as housing, employment, relationship and energy issues.

Our staff are committed to continuing to deliver essential face-to-face services from accessible community venues across Barnsley, and our growing volunteer team is helping us to expand further the amount of advice we can provide by telephone and email.

Our volunteer training programme gives local people the opportunity to develop skills and experiences - and to give something back to their community.

**Our
volunteers
play a vital role in
the running of our
services.**



**Volunteers
accounted for almost**

33%

**of our team
in 25/26.**

The Results of our Work

Between April 2025 and March 2026, we helped **6,317** people with **20,444** different issues. That's an average of **3** issues per client.

Top 5 issues

Debt	7,458
Benefits and Tax Credits	3,060
Housing	1,685
Universal Credit	1,609
Charitable Support & Foodbanks	947

Debt and benefits continue to be the main issues for most of the people we help:

- We helped people manage over **£4.9 million** of problem debt.
- We supported clients to claim almost **£1.4 million** in Universal Credit and other benefits!

We issued

385

vouchers for emergency household support.

We made

133

referrals to foodbanks for emergency food parcels.

Advice Delivery Channels

An increase in volunteers, through recruitment and retention, has given us capacity to support more people through email and telephone.

Email remains the most used method of contact for clients, accounting for nearly half of the contacts made.

However, the delivery of in-person advice remains important and the value of face-to-face advice is highlighted in this quote from our annual client survey report.

“I was very down, I didn't know what to do... [The adviser] was very easy to talk to. Very helpful and understood my worries. Within 24 hours they had a massive impact on my situation.”

In 2025/26
we made
3,856
face-to-face contacts
with clients.

In 2025/26
49%
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.

Accessible Support - A Client's Story

Natasha* was really anxious. She'd recently become a single mother and was on maternity leave with her month-old child. She was depending on maternity pay and a small amount of money from Universal Credit. She'd had to borrow money from a friend towards her bills as most of what she had coming in was taken up by the cost of her rent.

Her friend suggested she contact CAB, so Natasha sent an email outlining her circumstances and soon received a detailed response from a CAB adviser, with links to some benefits calculators to help Natasha ascertain for herself whether she was missing out on some benefits.

The adviser also gave information about the Sure Start maternity grant and how to access help with energy bills and foodbanks, and suggested she might want to apply for Council Tax Support. They sent links to the information so she could easily access it from home when it was convenient.

Finally, the adviser explained how to make an appointment to speak to an adviser in person, so they could explore all possible avenues and support Natasha towards improving her financial situation.

By using email as the first point of contact Natasha was easily able to access our advice at her convenience, knowing additional support through other channels was available if she needed it.



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

Evaluation of our Services

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



“Polite, quick, every detail was noted. They did more than anyone has ever done, they cared.”

100% felt the service they received was good or excellent.

100% said they would use the service again.

100% said they would recommend our service to someone else.

100% felt less stressed or anxious after seeing the adviser.

94% thought their health and wellbeing would improve after seeing the adviser.

93% felt more able to manage their own affairs.

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 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 36A Queens Road 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 National Debtline. 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. Closed on Bank Holidays.

CONSUMER HELPLINE: 0808 223 1133

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



“As a person who suffers badly with their wellbeing, I feel the service I received helped me so much with my anxiety and was stress free!”

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 that we process - data from clients, staff, funders, and strategic partners.

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
AQS Certification
Advice with Casework:
Welfare Benefits
and Debt.**

Vital Volunteers

As an independent, local charity, our volunteers play a vital role in the running of our services. We couldn't run any of our projects or services without them!

For over 60 years, our wonderful team of volunteers has been at the heart of our advice services in Barnsley. They come from all walks of life and give up their free time to help people find a way forward in their lives.

2025/26 saw a significant rise in volunteer recruitment and retention, contributing to our increased capacity to help more people.

88
volunteer
information
packs were
requested.

26
volunteers
supported the
delivery of our
services.

10
new volunteer advisers
completed their
training and are
able to deliver
advice to
clients.

"I had no support. The adviser has changed my life. I have actually felt that someone wants to help me. Their advice was spot on. Fantastic service."

A Volunteer's Story...

"Before I volunteered at CAB, I didn't know the extent of what they could do. It's inspiring to see the difference they make to the community and to see a team of people who are so kind.

I received the warmest welcome and the best support from the team, which made me keen to learn and allowed me to progress in my role, giving me the confidence I needed to begin delivering telephone advice. I knew I had my supervisor beside me to help and it was easy to ask for help, which I do struggle with.

I gained valuable knowledge through online training and hands-on experience of responding to emails in areas such as legal, debt, benefits, employment, housing, as well as handling phone calls to allocate shopping vouchers and food parcels, set up debt appointments and direct clients to outreaches based on their location and needs. I've gained many transferable skills such as developing my customer service and teamwork and learning about the importance of confidentiality when working with public data.

My time at CAB helped me to realise that my true enjoyment comes from helping people through struggles and seeing their stress lift.

Volunteering has allowed me to pursue a role in banking, which helps people organise their finances, which is a big stress factor in a lot of people's lives. Without this experience I wouldn't have been so well equipped for this role but Citizens Advice allowed me to flourish."



Become a Volunteer

Our volunteers help us reach more people in need while building new skills and experiences for themselves.

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 from anyone living in Barnsley. 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
Andrea Spencer
Barry Eldred
Christine Cunliffe

Claire Meager
Dave Fullen
Ian Guest
Janine Eldred

Jen Macphail
Lorna Lewis
Michael McHugh
Norah Gregory

Philip Michael Watson
Rudo Mkumba
Suzanne Storey
Taiwo Olamoju
Tracy Bryant

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

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/

With Thanks to our Team

A great big thank you to all our staff, volunteers and trustees who have contributed so much of their time and energy to help support the people of Barnsley.

In 2025/26 we worked with many staff and volunteers including:

**We
really
couldn't do it
without
you!**

Paid Staff

Alison Bailey	Laura Smith
Amy Morris	Lauren Matthews
Becky Taylor	Linda Rayner
Carmel Murray	Lynda Carey
David Andy	Lyndsey Saunders
Elisabeth Evans	Richard Hodgkinson
Emily Stott	Sharon Draper
Helen Corker	Stacey Butterworth-Starkey
Jo Clark	Toni O'Neill
Kyle Turner	

CAB Trustees

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

Volunteers

Amelia Kuritzin
Deeba Deeba
Elizabeth Wallis
Ethel Mensah
Linda Rayner
Phil Scothern

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 2025-26 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



Money &
Pensions
Service



Rotary

BARNSLEY ROCKLEY
ROTARY CLUB
(District 1220)



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

Support our Charity



Citizens Advice Barnsley is registered with easyfundraising, which means over 8,000 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!

Barnsley and District Citizens Advice Bureau

36A Queens Road,
Barnsley,
S71 1AR.



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



Citizens Advice Barnsley is a Hate Crime Reporting Centre

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Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRN: 617498. Registered office as above.