

Free advice and information in the heart of our community



Kingston
Upon Thames

Our service is delivered online, by telephone, by email and face to face appointments.

Online self help materials



37,128 unique page views last year (**101 per day**) and a **20% increase** on last year - showing how many people locally need this help and can use online materials.

The pages most used were;



Our '**Cost of Living Toolkit**' received **1,547** hits.



Housing information



Benefits



How to get in touch with us.

Telephone



We helped **2,538** local people on the phone and introduced the option for people to book a phone call at a time to suit them. If we can't get back to people then they get a text message with info of other agencies who may be able to help.

Email enquiries from clients



We helped **978** people and added to the **2,538** phone calls this means we helped **3,516** local people - **17** every working day...

What problems affected our communities?

We dealt with over 7,000 issues this year (just over 30 every day).

We discussed the problems with our clients and gave them tailored advice or helped them negotiate with third parties or prepare cases for courts or tribunals.

We advised on 1,802 inquiries about welfare benefits:



195 were about initial claims and entitlements.



267 queries related to disability benefits (often appealing when a claim was refused).



104 problems on the council tax rebate scheme.



287 enquiries about benefits to help with housing costs

We gave **137** people advice that helped them avoid eviction and losing their home. If these clients had lost their homes, it would have cost the council in excess of £2 million to rehome them.

In the last year we helped people secure **£320,000** of financial gains such as debts being written off, benefit entitlements being received.

We received **478** queries about debts. The majority of these related to fuel and rent arrears and council tax payments.

Who approached us for help?



71%
of clients were aged 25-55



33%
of our clients were employed
(either full or part time).



36%
were private tenants.



7%
of our clients were unemployed.
Others were retired, sick,
students or carers.



56% of clients were disabled or
had long term health conditions. Of these;

- 22% had mental health issues
- 31% had physical impairments



40%
of our clients come from ethnic
communities.

Who are we?

Our team working with clients is made up of 8 paid staff and 26 volunteers.

Every hour that our paid staff undertakes on client work supports a further 2 hours by our volunteers.

Our current funding from RBK is for £272,000 per year.

Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds and include people who have worked as lawyers, accountants, civil servants, social workers, careers advisers, bank managers, HR and PR experts.

Our advice is quality assured under the Advice Quality Standard scheme and we achieved top scores throughout the year for quality and consistency.

We have been serving the community for over 80 years and have evolved as local people's needs have changed - we are a safe pair of hands.



Whoever you are: whatever the problem

We know what challenges local people face and can develop and respond to meet today's needs as well as tomorrow's (and yesterday's).

Our timely advice helps local people to avoid problems - as well as to address them if they happen - we are the fence at the top of the cliff as well as the ambulance at the bottom.



**Kingston
Upon Thames**

Contact us

www.citizensadvicekingston.org.uk

you can call us on 020 3166 0953

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