

# NEWSLETTER



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## HOW WE DID: THE FACTS AND FIGURES DATES COVERED: 1.4.2022-28.2.2023

Citizens Advice West Suffolk is helping more and more clients each year thanks to support from funders, its vital staff and volunteers. Changes in society mean that demand for CAWS services continues to grow - one area which has come to the fore in recent weeks being clients seeking advice for charitable support and foodbank contacts. Here's a snapshot of what the charity achieved in the 11 months ending on February 28th, the number of clients supported and the areas in which clients are seeking the greatest guidance.



## SPOTLIGHT ON: THE SUPPORTED ADVICE PROJECT

The Supported Advice Team (SAT) was created in 2020 to help people with poor mental health and severe mental illnesses (SMIs) overcome practical problems that have become both sources of stress and obstacles to recovery. We are funded by the National Lottery Community Fund (1/3/21 to 31/3/24) and through Suffolk Community Foundation's 'Equity in Mind' programme. Clients referred into SAT receive an enhanced level of support over core services. They are allocated an experienced adviser with training in mental health awareness and communication skills. The adviser will co-ordinate the advice process; provide support and encouragement; liaise with external organisations; and plan onward referrals to appropriate partners. Our

objectives are to reduce the stress and duration of the advice process and to minimise disengagement; and thereby give clients the best chance of overcoming their issues. In the first six months of 2022/23, we supported 315 clients with over 2,500 issues, increased their income by £392,000 and managed £50,000 of debt. We evaluate our clients' wellbeing using ONS4. We are passionate about collaboration and in participating in an integrated network of community-based mental health resources. In 2021/22, over 50% of referrals into SAT were made by 17 external organisations, including local government, primary and secondary NHS services and other charities. **PCN Referrals:** In 2021/22 we received 69 referrals from the Lifelink social prescribers.

Since 1/4/22 we have received 267 referrals from the PCN social prescribers. Referrals have come from 20 social prescribers from 10 GP surgeries. We don't track number by surgery, but by far the largest number of referrals are coming from Forest Surgery (>50%); and increasingly, Barrow and Guildhall Surgery. The others are from the Mount Farm, Swan, Clare, Angel Hill, Victoria, Haverhill Family and Orchard Surgeries. If the referrals continue at this rate, we are likely to receive between 650 and 900 PCN referrals a year which is unsustainable for our service with our current funding. In 2021/23 the service helped 5,874 individual people with an expenditure of £627,646.

Carol Eagles, CEO



Members of the Supported Advice Team