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31.03.19

 Torridge, North,  
Mid & West Devon

# NORTH DEVON

## Annual Impact Report 2018/19

7,267  
clients  
supported  
by our ND  
offices

12,924  
individual  
issues  
dealt with

69%  
increase in  
clients  
from last  
year

66% of all  
advice on  
welfare, debt,  
housing &  
employment

£4.1 million  
of income  
gain  
awarded

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## Introduction

The statistics in this report are drawn from the Citizens Advice national client database on which all clients helped individually by the Charity, whether face-to-face or digitally, are recorded.

Citizens Advice Torrige, North, Mid and West Devon (TNMWD) has been part of the local community in one form or another since 1940. Our service is an independent charity. Our offices in North Devon are located in 1-3 Bridge Buildings, Barnstaple, The Ilfracombe Centre in Ilfracombe and the Amory Centre in South Molton. We also offer an outreach service in Barnstaple's Freedom Centre, which offers a service of signposting our clients to our North Devon offices. The service in North Devon makes a huge contribution to the local community and we hope that this report will show you how.

The funding to operate our core service is helped with a grant from North Devon District Council and Devon County Council (via Citizens Advice Devon). We also receive regular donations from Barnstaple, Ilfracombe and South Molton Town Councils along with local Parish Councils. We continue to develop alternative funding streams including our own local fundraising which includes supermarket collections in the area and grant applications to local charitable trusts.

Citizens Advice Torrige, North, Mid and West Devon helps people to solve their problems. Our service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination. Our policy research work influences local and national government.

Clients can access our service face-to-face, by phone or through our webchat and email service. Our Barnstaple office is one of two Adviceline hubs within our Charity that supports residents across the District with telephone advice and information. Some clients are empowered to solve problems by themselves; those requiring more support receive specialist casework. By offering advice across key areas such as benefits, debt, housing and employment, we aim to bring about positive changes in people's lives.

If you have queries or are interested in discussing further access to the data, please email [info@ruraldevoncab.org.uk](mailto:info@ruraldevoncab.org.uk)

## Part of the Citizens Advice Service

Citizens Advice Torrige, North, Mid and West Devon benefits from being part of the Citizens Advice service, however we receive no financial support from our Governing Body and operate as a local, independent Charity.

Our established brand makes us a household name, and clients access a well-known and trusted service. Out of 22 national charities, the Citizens Advice service is ranked by the general public as being the most helpful, approachable, professional, informative, effective/cost effective, reputable and accountable. Stakeholders recognise our wealth of insight and expertise, making us a valuable local partner.

Being part of a national infrastructure, that provides support and additional services, adds to our credibility and reliability. This includes our access to specialist insight, up-to-date advice information systems, and policy expertise.

Citizens Advice Torrige, North, Mid and West Devon takes on board all of the benefits of being part of a national service, delivering a better service as a result. We continue to provide the best support for our clients, embrace new opportunities and meet the challenges faces by the local community.

## North Devon District Council Grant

The grant we receive from North Devon District Council supports the core service we provide to residents in North Devon. Whilst the contribution from NDDC does not cover the entire cost of running the Barnstaple, Ilfracombe and South Molton offices, it is significant. The grant contributes to the following:

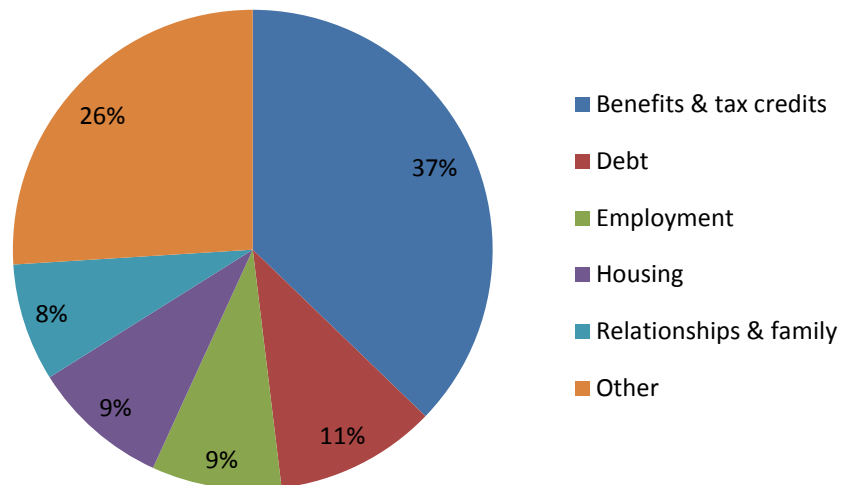
- Rent for both the Barnstaple, Ilfracombe and South Molton offices
- Utility costs on a pro-rata basis across the ND offices
- Training costs for recruiting and training volunteers
- Maintaining and developing digital services
- Staffing costs
- Professional fees (auditors/legal fees)
- Insurance policies we need
- Volunteer expenses for travel
- Stationary and communication costs
- I.T. equipment for the core office
- Maintenance and office equipment
- Citizens Advice membership fee and the quality of advice and organisational audit on a pro-rata basis

## Our impact in 2018/19

In 2018/19, the Barnstaple, Ilfracombe and South Molton offices (as part of Citizens Advice Torridge, North, Mid and West Devon):

- **Dealt with just under 13,000 new issues**, an increase of 25% on the last 12 months through face to face or telephone.
- **Our advisers saw over nearly 7,200 clients** (increase of 69%) - through face to face appointments, phone calls, letters and emails.

### Top 5 Advice Categories



### Advice by Wards (North Devon)

Wards in North Devon	% Clients	Wards in North Devon	% Clients
Bickington and Roundswell	5.70%	Ilfracombe East	1.70%
Bishop's Nympton	1.70%	Ilfracombe West	3.70%
Bratton Fleming	1.10%	Instow	1.70%
Braunton East	2.80%	Landkey, Swimbridge and Taw	4.80%
Braunton West	2.60%	Longbridge	5.00%
Central Town	12.20%	Lynton and Lynmouth	1.20%
Chittlehampton	1.20%	Marwood	0.70%
Chulmleigh	1.60%	Newport	6.60%
Combe Martin	3.10%	North Molton	2.20%
Forches and Whiddon Valley	7.00%	Pilton	5.00%
Fremington	4.60%	South Molton	7.60%
Georgeham and Morteohoe	1.20%	Witheridge	1.50%
Heanton Punchardon	1.60%	Yeo Valley	6.30%
Ilfracombe Central	5.70%		

## What did we advise on in 2018/19?

In 2018/19, North Devon dealt with 12,924 issues.

### Top Advice Categories

Top 5 Benefit Issues	% of Benefit issues 18/19
Personal Independence Payment	26%
Employment Support Allowance	14%
Initial Claim	10%
Attendance Allowance	8%
Other benefit issues	42%

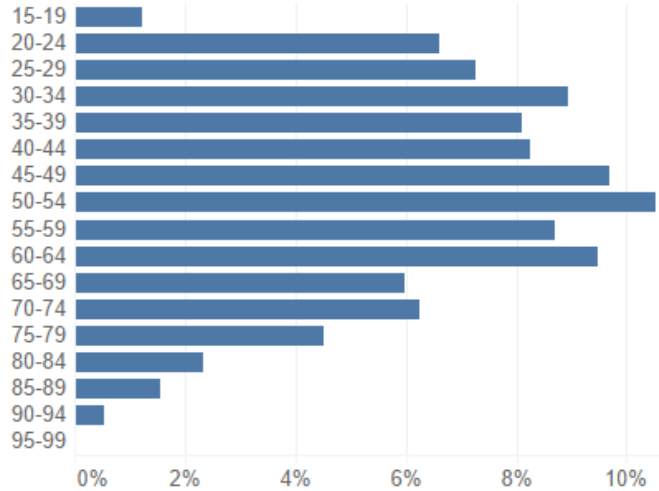
Top 5 Debt Issues	% of Debt issues 18/19
Council Tax Arrears	22%
Credit, Store & Charge Cards	18%
Water supply & sewerage	11%
Debt Relief Order	10%
Other Debt issues	39%

Top 5 Housing Issues	% of Housing issues 18/19
Private sector rented property	28%
Threatened homelessness	13%
Environmental & neighbour issues	9%
Housing association property	8%
Other housing issues	42%

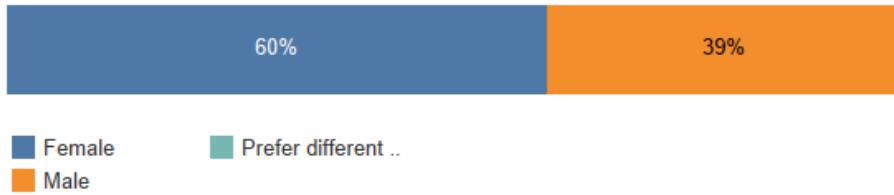
Top 5 Employment Issues	% of Employment issues 18/19
Pay & Entitlements	21%
Dismissal	15%
Terms & Conditions of Employment	15%
Dispute resolution	11%
Other employment issues	38%

# Who are our North Devon clients?

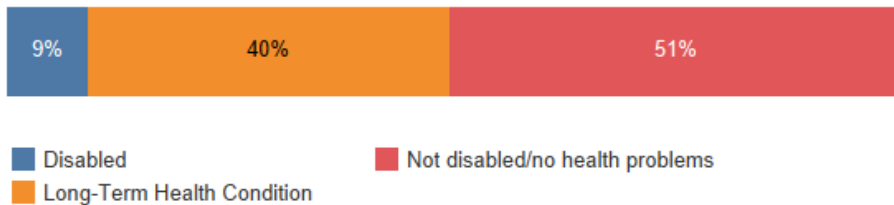
## Age



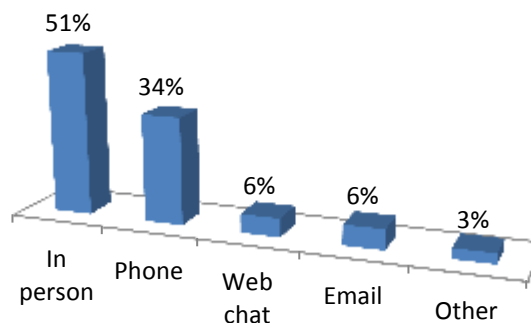
## Gender



## Disabled / Long term health condition



# How clients access our services



## Outcomes of Advice

We measure the impact of our advice by assessing whether clients achieve outcomes. In cases where we are able to identify the outcome, we record it in our database. However, clients often do not return after advice to let us know whether their problems were solved, so the number of outcomes recorded is likely to be lower than the actual number achieved.

Outcomes often include financial gains for clients, such as ongoing benefits awarded or debts written off. These can help to maximise a client's income.

A summary of outcomes recorded by TNMWD in 2018/19 for North Devon:

### Advice Outcomes

Advice Outcomes- North Devon	2017/18	2018/19
Clients achieving financial outcomes	527	704
Value of income gain	£1,698,953	£4,107,417
Average value of outcomes involving income gain	£3,224	£3594
Average value of outcomes involving debt written off	£12,180	£10,645

### Debt Advice Outcomes

Successful prioritisation and rescheduling of debts is a key outcome of our service. Repayment rescheduling includes: debt management programmes; individual voluntary agreements; administration orders; re-mortgages and mortgage rescue schemes.

When debts are rescheduled, priority debts will be paid first. Priority debts include Council Tax, Local Authority Housing arrears and Income tax. Therefore rescheduling debts creates direct benefits to both local and national government.

In some circumstances, debts may be written off entirely. Examples include bankruptcy; debt relief orders and the waiving of unpaid charges. Our Charity offers a combination of generalist and specialist advice, so that we tailor the service to clients' needs. We work with clients to assess their liabilities, draw up a financial statement and identify ways to resolve their problems. In some cases we may act on a client's behalf, for example by liaising with creditors.

## Our policy research work

At Citizens Advice we see two million people every year, and we have a closer understanding of the problems that people experience than any other organisation. Our local Citizens Advice know which policies are working and spot emerging problems early. In our policy research we combine these insights with analysis of wider social and economic trends, and set out new ideas to improve policy and delivery for all.

As an organisation we have completed 304 evidence forms that highlight local issues to our national office and allow us to spot trends and emerging issues that might impact on our client, In North Devon we have completed 86 these highlighted issues around Universal credit and tenancy issues which we are making our local campaign for the next year.

Nationally we are working on the following campaigns, Disability benefits and the long waiting times regarding appeals, the cost of redirecting mail for multiple surnames in a property, and the struggles that a homeless person has obtaining an address for mail.

As part of our big energy saving week we held an event in Barnstaple Pannier Market and by using our energy comparison site we saved a client £700 per year and made sure that they were put onto the priority service scheme by the new supplier as the client and her husband were elderly and the husband had a long term disability.



### Case Study



We supported an elderly gentleman to complete Attendance Allowance under special rules. Our team mentioned to the Client that his wife could claim the Carer Premium, but they did not get back to her. The Client was awarded the high rate of £85.60 per week. Both he and his wife are in receipt of Pension Credit (guarantee credit) of £37.23 per week.

The Client's wife was then referred to us by the Hospice and our team went to visit to complete Attendance Allowance for her. If she is awarded any rate of Attendance Allowance, then clients would be eligible for four premiums on Pension Credit, which means their additional Pension Credit will be £200.60 per week, with low rate Attendance Allowance, this couple will be £257.90 per week better off.



## Key Information



We provide the advice people need for the problems they face and improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.



We are a service that has face-to-face access at its core yet embraces new technologies to reach a wider audience and open up additional avenues of communication.



Our services in North Devon are available through face to face sessions, telephone and email advice. The Citizens advice public site is available 24/7  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)



The Citizens Advice Service is the UK's largest provider of free advice for members of the public. Citizens Advice Torridge, North, Mid and West Devon is part of a network comprising of 280 individual charities. Together the service delivers advice from over 3,300 community locations across the UK.



We work with partners to develop a range of coordinated services to best suit the client's needs, making full use of the strengths of the best advice agencies across North Devon and using best practice.



We offer face-to-face services in Barnstaple, Ilfracombe, and South Molton. We also partner with the Freedom Centre.









We generate evidence forms based on common enquiries. We harness this evidence to campaign to Government at a National and local level. We do this to help make society fairer and improve the policies and practices that directly affect people's lives.



In addition to our core service we run a number of hosted projects (externally funded), delivering specialised services. They provide added value to local people.

# Wellbeing benefits

## After clients come to see us...

 <p><b>4 in 5</b> Felt less stressed, depressed or anxious</p>	 <p><b>1 in 2</b> had more money or control over their finances</p>	 <p><b>Nearly 1 in 4</b> had a more secure housing situation</p>
 <p><b>Nearly 1 in 2</b> felt their physical health had improved</p>	 <p><b>1 in 5</b> had better relationships with other people</p>	 <p><b>Nearly 1 in 5</b> found it easier to do their job or find a job</p>

*Citizens Advice outcomes and impact research, 2015*

Our hosted projects that we are able to run, add value to the services that local people can access (these are not funded by District Council)

## The range of ways to access our services

- **General advice**

For 24 hour information, please visit [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

An email and webchat service is also available between

10am and 4pm Monday to Friday

Call **Adviceline** 03444 111 444

9:30am to 4pm Monday to Friday

**Visit our offices**, times on our website: [www.ruraldevoncab.org.uk](http://www.ruraldevoncab.org.uk)

- **Need help applying for Universal Credit**

Call us for free: 0800 144 8 444 (8am to 6pm) or

For online advice visit: [citizensadvice.org.uk/helptoclaim](http://citizensadvice.org.uk/helptoclaim)

Visit us see: <http://www.ruraldevoncab.org.uk/how-we-help>

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For more information or for further details relating to this report, please email [info@ruraldevoncab.org.uk](mailto:info@ruraldevoncab.org.uk)

