

Ash Citizens Advice Bureau

How did we do?

2013 - 2014

The Charity For Your
Community



Review of the Year. How we helped our clients in **2013- 2014** – some case studies:

➤ **Disability Benefits**

Client applied for Disability Living Allowance but was turned down. Due to ill health, he was unable to work and finding it hard to make ends meet.

Action/outcome: He was out of time to appeal but Ash CAB helped him obtain additional medical evidence and made a fresh claim. This time client received high rate mobility and middle rate care for life. His wife was then entitled to claim Carers Allowance. The net increase in the income for the household was £235 per week.

➤ **Homelessness Prevention**

Client age 57 was working, but had heart bypass and was made redundant. He had submitted a claim for Employment Support Allowance but the claim was declined. Client had received lump sum from redundancy and also occupational pension, and continued to live off this. He had amassed significant rent and council tax arrears and was in danger of losing his home.

Action/Outcome: Contact made with ESA, challenged their decision and provided evidence to support the claim. Department of Work and Pensions rang to advise of their error and a large payment was made to client of around £5k. Rent and council tax arrears now cleared.

➤ **Benefits**

Client was an 86 year old widow who was struggling to make ends meet.

Action/Outcome: Bureau did a full benefit check and established that client was entitled to Housing Benefit of £45 per week. The bureau helped the client to complete an application form and she was awarded a 3 month backdate. The client felt she would now be much more able to cope with her bills.

Some Statistics:-

- **We help on average around 60 clients per week. This is more than 3000 clients over the past year (1822 new clients).**
- **£633,350 of Welfare benefit entitlement identified. (£340,000 last year).**
- **We helped clients with 76 applications to the Local Assistance Scheme**
- **We distributed 104 food parcels (35 last year) feeding 173 adults and 80 children.**
- **84 (62 last year) pro bono advice sessions with local solicitors covering family and employment law.**
- **Advice from our homelessness prevention case workers ensured 80 householders didn't lose their homes.**
- **40% of our clients come from the 5 most deprived wards in the Borough.**

The Value of Volunteers: 85% of our work force (40 people eg trustees, advisers, admin workers, IT support) at Ash CAB are volunteers and without their commitment and loyalty to the bureau, there would be no service for our clients. These volunteers contribute time worth an estimated annual value of **£118,916**.



Feedback from a volunteer: *“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to have the experience of working with such an inspiring group of people in an amazing organisation”*

We welcome volunteers from all sections of the community.

Feedback from a grateful client: *“Thank you very much for all your kindness, efforts and application of your expertise and wisdom in handling our desperate and complex case. The news of the outcome of your negotiation on our behalf yesterday, made our day and brought some pleasant relief to our situation.”*

New Initiatives – working together in Surrey

Local Assistance Scheme: Ash CAB is one of 11 Surrey bureaux helping clients in crisis to access financial help and/or furniture under this Surrey County Council scheme.

Healthwatch

We are part of the network of Surrey bureaux enabling clients to share views and concerns about local health and social care services.

Surrey Family & Mediation

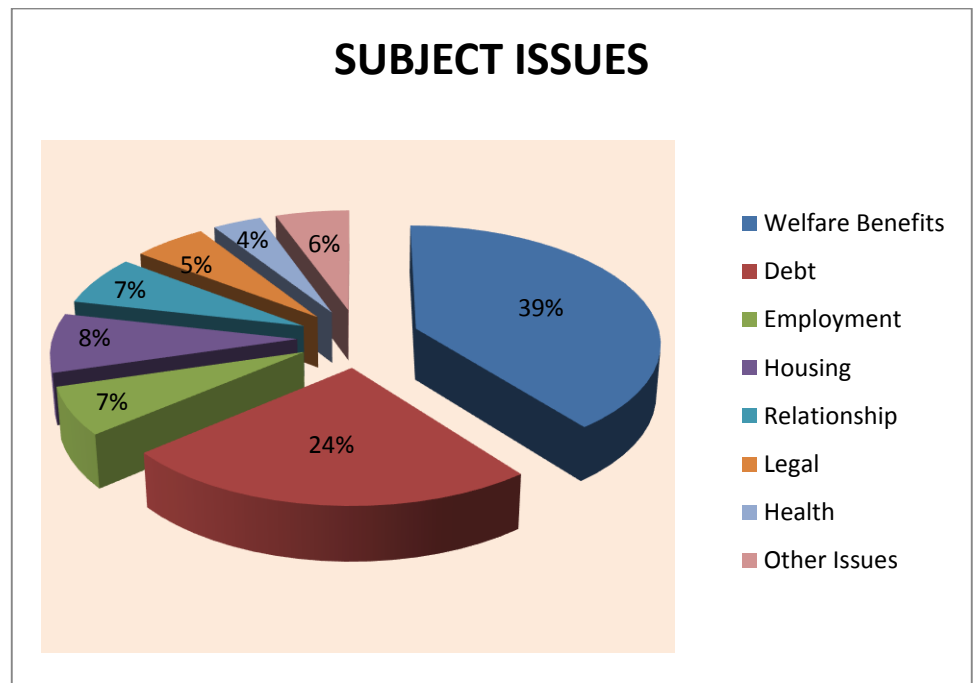
In collaboration with SF&M we are now offering family mediation on the last Wednesday of each month.

Guildford Advice Services (GAS)

A lottery funded project, bringing agencies in Guildford Borough together to promote closer working and secure future funding.

Breakdown of issues our advisers handled in 2013 - 2014

SUBJECT ISSUES	ISSUES
Welfare Benefits	2535
Debt	1570
Employment	421
Housing	519
Relationship	437
Legal	353
Health	236
Other Issues	354
TOTAL	6425



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