

Our impact in 2020-21

The difference we make to Wealden



Wealden

We are Wealden Citizens Advice

We can all face problems that seem complicated or intimidating. At Wealden Citizens Advice, we believe no one should have to face these problems without good quality, independent advice.

Citizens Advice was founded in September 1939, as war was declared in Europe. As we recover from a global pandemic that has been described as the world's greatest test since World War II, our role remains as crucial now as it was then. In the first year of the pandemic, our advisors provided 20 people every day with personalised, free and independent advice. Nationally, our online advice was viewed 62.8 million times. Our service transformed overnight as lockdowns prevented us seeing people face-to-face. This was a transformation made possible by the dedication and commitment of our staff and volunteers, for whom we are so grateful.

We offer confidential advice over the phone, via email and in person, for free. When we say we're here for everyone, we mean it. People rely on us because we're independent and totally impartial. No one else sees so many Wealden residents with so many different kinds of problems, and that gives us a unique insight into the challenges we are facing today. With this evidence, we can then influence and campaign – from individual companies right up to the government – and work with them to make things better for Wealden. That's why we're here: to give people the knowledge and the confidence they need to find their way forward – whoever they are, and whatever their problem.



£1.7 million

saved by government and public services last year.

That's **£77** for every **£1** invested in our service.

Our impact in 2020/21

Every year thousands of people come to us for help solving their problems. This means we're an important part of the Wealden community, with a credible understanding of local needs. We use this to tailor our services and help improve local policies and practices for the benefit of us all.

We're here for everyone. We try to reach as many people who need our help as possible. This year we've helped 3800 clients get the advice they need through phone, email or text.



3800 clients
Supported this year



4700 calls
Answered by our
volunteers



264 clients
Saved money on
their fuel bills



884 clients
Were provided with
tailored debt advice



82% of clients
With benefit or UC
issues had their
problem resolved



1115
Food vouchers were
issued to Wealden
residents

What we do

We help people with a range of problems including issues with housing, debt, benefits, employment, relationships and consumer rights. Sometimes people have more than one issue they need help with.

Example	"I need help to claim Universal Credit"	"I need help with a bailiff issue"	"I need help – I have no gas and my smart meter isn't working"	"I need help with a deposit as I have nowhere to live"	"I need help to get my redundancy pay"
Client issues this year	4653	1868	1464	1640	1945

How we help



82 %
By telephone

People often call us with multiple or complex problems. We can deal with most of the issues people come to us with, tailoring our advice to their needs.
Free phone **0808 278 7811**



18 %
by text and webchat and email

We also have our Text to Call service simply text **ADVICE** with your name & postcode to **81400** and we will call you back. Email via www.wealdencitizensadvice.org.uk

Face to Face



Before the pandemic we supported 42% of our clients face to face in one of our 3 offices in Hailsham, Crowborough or Uckfield, as well as our outreach services in Heathfield, Polegate and Willingdon. We hope to re-open our offices as soon as it is safe to do so.

Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are amazing. They are vital, allowing us to reach many more people than if we were purely staff-run. In turn, volunteers benefit from gaining new skills and personal development, better wellbeing and community engagement. These positive effects on individual's lives have additional value for society, through the advantages and savings associated with happier, healthier and more productive members of the community.



All of our retired volunteers believe it keeps them mentally active*

Client feedback 2020-21

“A most helpful and understanding service. I couldn't have done this without their help and kindness. It was so nice to speak to someone who is so understanding. Thank you”

“All I would wish for sympathetic, but practical. Showed me the way forward and I am now able to sort the remainder on my own. Thank you so much.”

“I required assistance in completing a claim form for Assistance Allowance. Wealden Citizens Advice assisted me in completing the form and as a result the allowance was granted. Without their help I don't think I would have been successful.”

Our advice is effective

Problems don't happen in isolation and can have severe consequences. Solving them stops these situations escalating.



8 in 10 people said their problem was solved following advice



9 in 10 people said we helped them find a way forward

Why fixing problems matter

If left unsolved, problems don't just affect the individual – they affect our community. Solving them creates considerable value to society.



85% of clients we help say that their problem negatively affected their life



89% of clients say they had difficulty knowing who to contact or how systems work before advice



78% of clients come to us when they needed to take action urgently

Our value to society

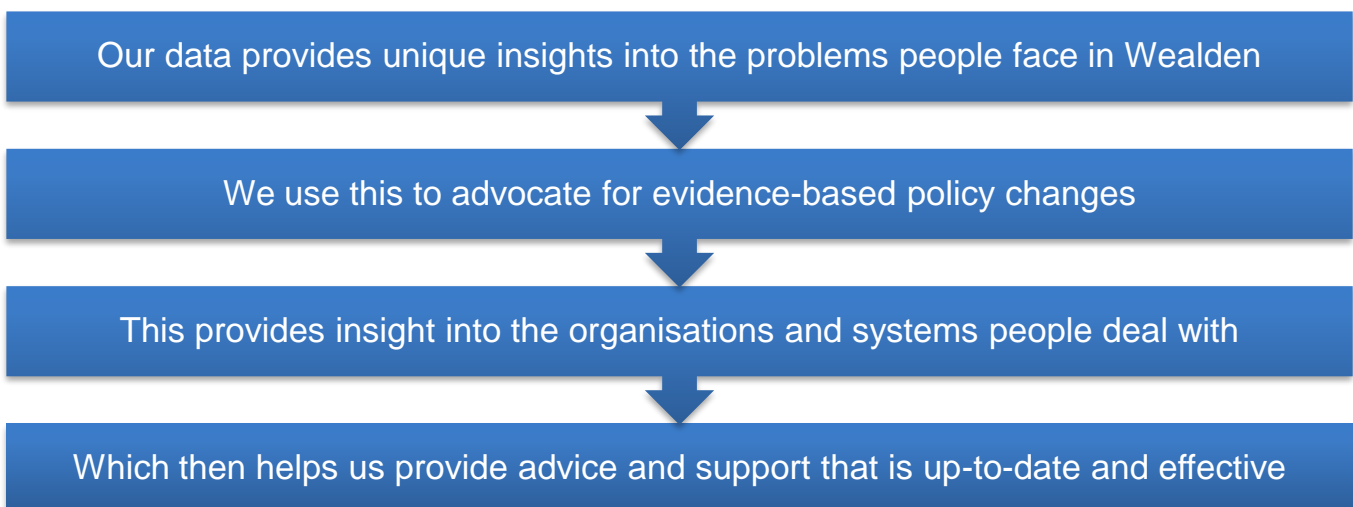
For every £1 invested in our service in 2020-21 we generated:



It's impossible to put a financial value on everything we do – but where we can, we have. We've used a Treasury-approved model to do this.

Using our influence to tackle people's problems – Research and Campaigns

No one else sees so many Wealden residents with so many different kinds of problems, and that gives us a unique insight into the challenges people are facing today. By using our data and evidence we're advocating for change to make life better for people. Citizens Advice achieved policy improvements across welfare, debt, housing, energy, employment, post and consumer issues. We also used our influence to shape the Government's initial Covid-19 response by outlining proposals to protect people's income.



Wealden Citizens Advice helps people find a way forward.

We provide free, confidential and independent advice to help people overcome their problems. We are a voice for our clients and consumers on the issues that matter to them.

We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment.

We're here for everyone.

We would like to use this opportunity to thank our funders, without whom, Wealden Citizens Advice would not be able to support so many Wealden residents.

Wealden District Council
Crowborough Town Council
Uckfield Town Council
Hailsham Town Council
East Sussex County Council
Alfriston Parish Council
Buxted Parish Council
Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council
Chiddingly Parish Council
Danehill Parish Council
East Hoathly with Halland Parish Council
East Dean & Friston Parish Council
Forest Row Parish Council
Framfield Parish Council
Hadlow Down Parish Council

Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council
Hellingly Parish Council
Herstmonceux Parish Council
Horam Parish Council
Laughton Parish Council
Maresfield Parish Council
Mayfield Parish Council
Pevensey Parish Council
Polegate TC
Rotherfield Parish Council
Westham Parish Council
Willingdon & Jevington Parish Council
Withyham Parish Council
Sussex Community Foundation

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