



# The people's champion

Impact Report  
for April 2023 to  
March 2024

citizens  
advice

Bromley



***“I am so thankful for all your support, particularly for helping me obtain the Household Support Fund.”***

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## **We are Citizens Advice Bromley**

As CEO of Citizens Advice Bromley, I'm proud of the impact we made in 2023-2024. We provided free, impartial advice to **over 4,000 people, answering 8,294 calls and 11,955 emails**. Our dedicated team helped clients navigate complex issues like debt, housing, employment rights and benefits.

The cost-of-living crisis highlighted the need for our support. We secured **over £1.34 million in financial gains** for our clients, including unclaimed benefits and debt relief. Our energy advice service was particularly crucial, helping people reduce costs and improve energy efficiency.

We've also expanded our digital services to reach more people, offering online advice and remote consultations. This ensures we're there for our community, especially those who may face barriers to accessing traditional services.

Our **66 volunteers and 23 staff members** are the heart of our organisation. Their dedication and compassion make a real difference and I'm immensely grateful to them.

Looking ahead, we're committed to enhancing our services, reaching underrepresented groups and advocating for systemic change. Together, we'll continue to support everyone in Bromley who needs us.

**Lorraine Whittaker**  
CEO, Citizens Advice Bromley



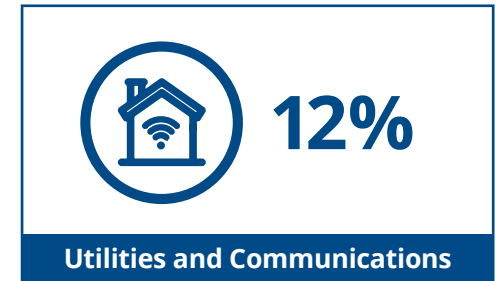
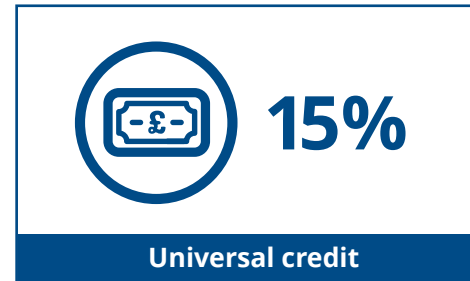
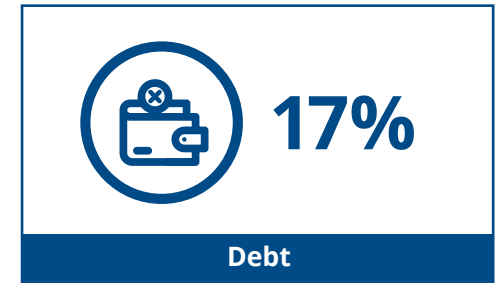
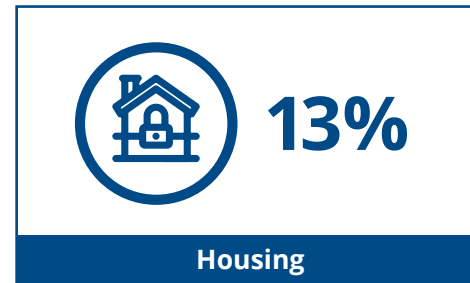
# What we do

Our telephone service through Bromley Well is the first point of contact for all Bromley residents and professionals.

In many cases, we can resolve a client's problem with one phone call. If not, we refer the caller to Bromley Well's specialist services, including our advisers and caseworkers.

People often come to us with a complex range of problems. These can include issues with housing, debt, benefits, employment and relationships.

## Our main advice areas are:



***"I came to say thank you. As a result of your help, I have been given a 10-year backdate on my benefit payment. I am so grateful."***





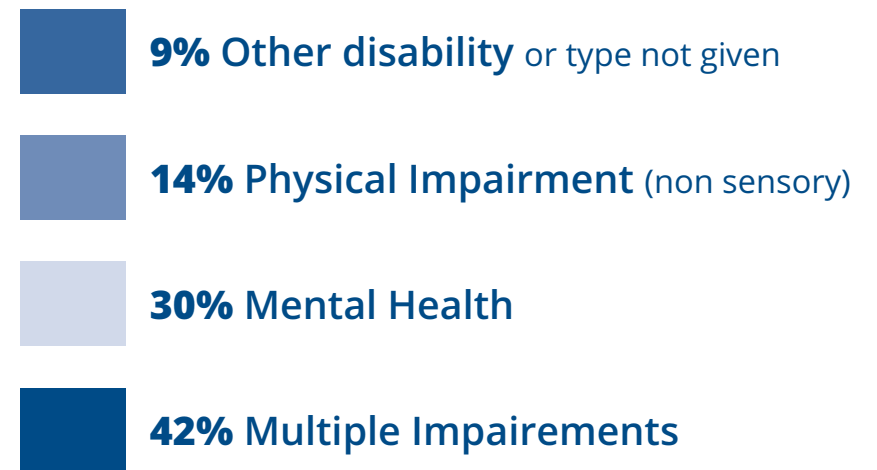
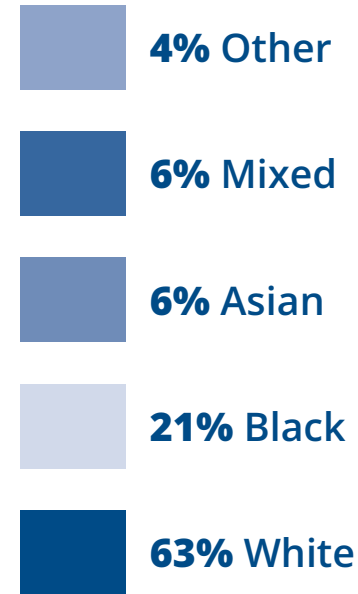
***"Your insight, patience and understanding did the trick. A big thanks to the organisation who makes itself so readily available to confused citizens."***

# Who we help

Our goal is to help everyone in Bromley find a way forward, whatever problem they face.

Our service is open for everyone living in the London Borough of Bromley.

The majority of our clients (70.2%) are aged 30-64 years. 66% of clients are disabled or have long term health issues.



# Our impact

from April 2023 to March 2024

£ Every **£1 of funding** to Citizens Advice Bromley generates **£7.10** in benefit to our clients

*Solving problems improves lives, meaning better wellbeing, participation and productivity for the people we help.*

**£1,574,739** saving to government and public spending

*By helping stop problems occurring or escalating, we reduce pressure on public services like health, housing or out-of-work benefits.*

**£6,117,400** value of our advice to the people we helped

*As part of our advice, we can increase people's income, through debts written-off, taking up benefits and solving consumer problems.*



**8,294** calls answered



**11,955** emails received from local residents and professionals



**19,408** issues we helped with



**4,000** individual clients helped



**4** outreach sites



**66** volunteers gave **7,202** hours of their time



**37** new volunteers recruited throughout the year

**93%** of people said they are happy with our service.

**95%** would use our services again in future.

**95%** would recommend us to a friend.

**None of this would be possible without our dedicated team of staff and volunteers, who work tirelessly to support the community we serve.**



# Highlights of the year

Many of our achievements are more than statistics. Here are just a few examples of projects and initiatives that make us proud to be Citizens Advice Bromley.

Our staff and volunteers **raised £1,308** by taking part in the London Legal Walk.

We launched a new **online referral form** to help us speed up referrals and **support more** residents.

We produced **newsletters** covering **cost of living trends, housing, negative budgets** and **main advice areas**, with a new focus on constituencies.

Specialist **housing advice**, delivered by our Housing Caseworker under our Southeast London Mind contract, is helping clients with mental health issues manage their housing issues.

Our team delivered **315 tailored energy advice** and **300 carbon monoxide advice** interviews.

We ran several **cost of living events**, including at the *Festival of Sport and Wellbeing* Bromley and the *Chislehurst Rocks* Festival.

***“Thank you, Citizens Advice Bromley. I could not have done it without you.”***

We launched a **new Intranet site** for our staff and volunteers to keep on top of internal news and information.

In April 2023, we established **Oak Community Church Foodbank** drop-in.

One of our **long-standing volunteers**, Dorothy, celebrated **30 years** of service.

We ran **first aid training sessions** for grass roots community groups.

# Our clients' stories

These client stories show some of the ways we can help.



## Case Study: Debt

The client was very stressed upon seeking our support, struggling financially and deeply affected by the cost of living crisis. Unable to read or write, without internet access, and being over pension age, the client also felt very isolated.

There was no money for food, and to make ends meet each month, borrowing from family, friends, and the bank had become a necessity. Benefits were not being claimed due to embarrassment about illiteracy.

Once we stepped in, a foodbank voucher was immediately issued. A debt support worker clarified eligibility for benefits and made referrals to the forms completion service and the physical disabilities team for assistance with a freedom pass application.

As a result of this support, the client is now receiving universal credit and attendance allowance, as well as a freedom pass. Bills are manageable, with some surplus for personal use. The client is now relieved, content, and no longer experiencing stress.

***“I wanted to thank you for your input and guidance, without which I would not have had the outcome I achieved.”***





### **Case Study: Welfare Benefits**

The client first contacted us for advice on benefits and housing after their mother passed away. Having been their mother's sole carer, they had no income, were in rent arrears, and wished to succeed the tenancy while claiming support for rent and council tax. The client was also experiencing both physical and mental health issues, making it difficult to claim Universal Credit. As a result, debts were accumulating.

With assistance from our caseworker, the client received a foodbank voucher, was guided on how to succeed the tenancy, and supported with their benefits claims.

When initial claims for Personal Independence Payment were unsuccessful and the client was not placed in the higher support group for Limited Capability for Work (disability element of Universal Credit), we helped them appeal and take their case to the Tribunals Service.

Thanks to our welfare benefits support, the client was ultimately awarded Personal Independence Payment for three years and Limited Capability for Work at the highest level for two years. They also received backdated payments totaling over £26,000, successfully gained tenancy in succession, and received cost-of-living allowances for individuals on low incomes.

***“ Thank you so very much for all your help and support during this very difficult period in my life.”***

# Vision for the future

Unfortunately, continued economic instability, mental health, digital transformation and housing issues continue to affect many of our clients. At Citizens Advice Bromley, we endeavour to meet the changing needs of the local community by:

- 1 Enhancing access to our services:** ensuring all Bromley residents can access free, independent and confidential advice, regardless of their digital or physical limitations.
- 2 Adapting to digital transformation:** in particular, we are looking at how we can provide easier access digitally to our advice and information.
- 3 Encouraging inclusion and diversity:** we want everyone to feel heard and represented. We seek to engage with underrepresented groups, offer advice in multiple languages and ensure all residents feel welcome and respected.
- 4 Strengthening partnerships and community engagement:** we aim to collaborate more with stakeholders to address issues like homelessness, food insecurity and financial hardship more effectively.
- 5 Providing financial stability and resilience support:** this is likely to become even more critical as cost of living pressures rise. We will ensure our debt and benefits advice services can help residents manage bills, access benefits and navigate complex financial challenges.
- 6 Promoting health and wellbeing advocacy:** we will continue to integrate more mental health support and collaborate with local healthcare providers to ensure clients have access to comprehensive health advice.
- 7 Supporting with sustainability and environmental issues:** we will continue to educate and support our clients on environmental issues through our Energy Advice and Low Carbon Transmission projects, so they can adapt more sustainable practices and improve energy efficiency.





# Thanks to our funders

None of our works could happen without the support of our funders. Our thanks go to all of them, especially our core funder, Bromley Third Sector Enterprise:



## Citizens Advice Bromley 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 on the issues that matter to them.

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

We're here for everyone.



Scan the QR code for more information

[www.bromleycab.org.uk](http://www.bromleycab.org.uk)

 @CAB\_Bromley

 @citizensadvicebromley

 @CitizensAdviceBromley

Telephone: **0808 278 7898** (freephone), Mon-Sat 9am-5pm.  
Or enquire via Bromley Well: [www.bromleywell.org.uk/make-a-referral](http://www.bromleywell.org.uk/make-a-referral)

To find out more about the information in this Impact Report, please contact: Loraine Whittaker, Chief Executive Officer, at [CEO@citizensadvicebromley.org.uk](mailto:CEO@citizensadvicebromley.org.uk)

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