

Subject: Fwd: Newsletter from Citizens Advice July 2019

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Citizens Advice South Warwickshire

Newsletter

July 2019

Jeremy Vanes, chief executive, CASW

We are beginning to focus on the 80th anniversary of the founding of Citizens Advice service nationally. The actual birthday itself is in early September and for those of you good at maths, that will take you back to September 1939 and the start of World War II. There are some fascinating stories about how and why the service was formed and operated in those early days. But what strikes me today is that the service then - as now - was largely dependent on volunteers. We have nearly 140 volunteers who are part of Citizens Advice South Warwickshire. They are at the heart of everything we do - giving their time to support local people in their times of need. So I was very proud when five of them won awards from Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA) at their annual awards event.

At a national level I was also pleased to see that the decade-long campaign by Citizens Advice to have letting fees outlawed has finally succeeded and the law changed last month. South Warwickshire is an area with an expensive rental sector so i

hope this change in the law will be of real benefit to tenants. You can read more about this reform in this newsletter along with updates on some of our work locally.

Ban on Unfair Letting fees

There are now 4.7 million households in the private rented sector and more than one third of those are families with dependent children. Thanks to a ten year campaign by Citizens Advice, unfair fees that are charged on top of normal letting fees are now illegal. These fees have been costing renters about £160 million a year. The following are now outlawed

- Viewing fees - you can't be charged to look round a property
- Fees to set up a tenancy - all fees associated with setting up a tenancy are now banned. This includes referencing and guarantor fees, inventory checks, credit checks and administration fees.
- Check out fees - you can't be charged with leaving a tenancy agreement or for having the property professionally cleaned.
- Third party fees - you can't be charged for using their party services such as reference checks or credit checks.

For a guide to what charges still apply to tenants , here's [more info](#) .



Make Every Contact Count

What are the signs and signals that someone is not coping well at home? Unopened letters, an empty fridge or a reluctance to go out? CASW has taken on the role of training front-line workers in Warwickshire to recognise these signs and be able to offer support.

The programme is called Make Every Contact Count (MECC) and the training will help improve the health and well being of people at home and give front-line workers confidence to start a conversation about difficult issues. The training covers a wide range of topics such as alcohol abuse, poor housing conditions and debt problems. Deb Key (pictured above) is the lead coordinator and trainer for CASW. She said " The training enables front-line professionals to really look at a client's needs and work out how they can help. There can be many complex issues affecting their lives. Knowing how to start a conversation, make a referral or signpost them to help can make such a difference.

"I really enjoy delivering this training because it brings me into contact with the various groups of professionals in Warwickshire. This helps me and CASW increase our knowledge of local services"



Back on Track

Our Back on Track- money advice in the community project - is offering its services to people living in the Maybird and Bishopton wards of Stratford, as well as Alcester, Henley, Southam, Lighthorne and Bidford. Jo Brown (pictured above) is the financial inclusion support worker who can see clients in their own homes or go to community venues across the area. Jo can help with budgeting advice, switching energy suppliers, reducing bills, maximising income, benefit checks and hardship grants.

Jo's role has been funded by Warwickshire County Council's local welfare scheme via Stratford District Council.

Jo said "I also work closely with the local welfare rights advice service and can help low income families with claims for pupil premium and free school meals." You can contact Jo on 07825 654605 or use this [Referral Form](#)

Stratford's new Mayor

In May, our chair Yvonne Hunter, attended the Stratford Mayor-making ceremony and was delighted to hear that Mayor Kate Rolfe was named CASW as one of her charities for 2019/20. This is very good news for us, as not only does it help to raise much needed funds, but also highlights that we are a local charity. We will be working with Kate, who used to be a trustee of the Stratford Citizens Advice, to organise some fund-raising events during her year. We hope you will be able to support some of

these during her year in office.

Adviceline: 0300 330 1183

Our Website



10 Hamilton Terrace
Leamington Spa
CV32 4LY

Monday 10 - 3.30
Tuesday Closed
Wednesday 10 - 2
Thursday 10 - 2
Friday 10 - 2

25 Meer Street
Stratford Upon Avon
CV37 6QB

Monday 10 - 3
Tuesday 10 - 3
Wednesday 10 - 3
Thursday Closed
Friday 10 - 3

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