



## Newsletter December 2018

### Jeremy Vanes, Chief Executive Officer - Citizens Advice South Warwickshire



This will be my first Christmas with Citizens Advice South Warwickshire having been in post for just five months. Those months have given me time to meet most of our funders, supporters and partners, although not everyone. My new year resolution will be to try and meet you all. I think this is particularly important as I'm sure the best way for Citizens Advice South Warwickshire to work in the future is to be working in partnership with others.

If we look at the problems that confuse and worry today's CA clients, these are often compounded issues. Food shortages, street homelessness, rising numbers of children moving into state care, high levels of credit debt and the anxiety of social isolation. These are not fixable by a quick

appeal to one organisation or agency. The clients who most need the time and help of a Citizens Advice team today often need multiple aspects of advice and assistance to help stabilise and resolve their questions. So we see very clearly the need to be working with others.

I would like to wish you all a happy and restful Christmas holiday and best wishes for a more settled New Year.

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### Loyal customer campaign

Citizens Advice has a successful track record in what are called "super complaints". Millions of consumers have benefitted from our starting the campaign on mis-selling of PPI insurance. The latest issue on which Citizens Advice is making a super complaint is about the worse treatment often given to loyal customers. Loyalty is often seen as something to be encouraged, even

rewarded. When a customer is loyal to a supermarket or coffee shop, for example, they often receive discounts or special offers from the business in return.

But when it comes to essential service markets - like energy, mobile, broadband and financial services things are different. Instead of being rewarded, long standing customers often pay more.

[The campaign](#) shows how people face a 'loyalty penalty' across essential markets and could be overpaying by as much as £987 - more than 4 months' worth of food for the average household. And it's often vulnerable consumers who pay the most.

### Volunteer profile Anne Carr



One of the first people you might meet if you come to our Stratford office is Anne Carr. Anne is a receptionist now but has spent an amazing 35 years as a volunteer and staff member with us. Anne received her long service award from Warwickshire High Sheriff Clare Sawdon.

Anne joined as a volunteer adviser back in 1983 when she was a young mum and wanted to stretch her mind as well as do something for the local community.

Her voluntary work lead to her having a staff job for 15 years. In those days each adviser in the Stratford office could be seeing 16 or 17 clients a day. Before computers, the whole system was paper

based. "The biggest change I've seen was the introduction of computers. No more manually updating the information with Tippex! Completing case notes was easier, except when the system went down which was quite often in the early days"

Anne particularly enjoyed her time as a Home Visitor. " Stratford District is such a large area and it is impossible for some people to get to our office. I felt I could really make a difference by visiting and usually completing disability forms. This was much easier to do in someone's home, as I could see more easily the problems they faced. Often the benefit they were awarded would almost double their income and make a real difference to their lives."

Anne retired in 2013 but returned as a volunteer receptionist. "It's a role I very much enjoy. I have contact with the people we help, keep in touch with my colleagues but still feel part of an organisation that has been part of my life for a long time. More than ever I believe CA has a very important role in our community".

If you are interested in being a volunteer for Citizens Advice South Warwickshire, [here are the details of who to contact](#). Full training is given and there are many backroom roles available supporting the general office.

### **New roles to help with financial advice**

From early 2019 two new financial inclusion support officers will be working in key areas of need across the whole of South Warwickshire.

These are partnership roles with Stratford District Council and Warwick District Council and they will be employed by CASW. They will work with key agency supporting people across both districts. The officers will deliver a community outreach programme to provide support to help individuals/households acquire and improve money management skills. This will consist of help and advice regarding debts, maximising income including benefit maximisation, options around fuel poverty and referrals to other types of support based on identified need.

The one year project is looking at delivering more support during 2019. We hope that their impact will attract further funding to help more people in the coming years. We will spotlight their work in future stakeholder newsletters when they are more established in their roles.

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### **CASW Outreach, Shipston open to everyone**

Thanks to a generous contribution from Councillor Jo Barker via her Warwickshire County Councillor Grant Fund, we are able to invite people to attend our alternate weekly Outreach service from Monday 7th January. As a local charity CASW relies entirely on charitable contributions to be able to maintain its services to the people of Stratford and Warwick Districts.



Thanks to match funding from Jo to an existing project delivering services to older people via Outreach in Shipston, we are thrilled to be able to open this to all residents for 2019.

The Shipston Outreach service is held every first and third Monday of the month between 10am and 1pm at New Clark House, Shipston and sessions are by appointment only. Please call 01789 200136 to book an appointment.

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### **Christmas food parcels and opening hours**

A big thank you to all who helped with putting together the Christmas food parcels. The Stratford office has distributed 44 parcels to single adults, 31 parcels to single parent families, and six went to two parent families.

There will be a drop in session at our Leamington Spa offices on Monday 24th December kindly supported by staff and volunteers. There is no drop in session on this date for Stratford upon Avon. To see our general opening hours and locations, please visit our [website](#)

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