

Our impact in 2020-21

The difference we make to Epsom & Ewell



We are Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell

Every year around 3,000 people come to us for help solving their problems.

This means we're an important part of the community, with a credible understanding of our clients' needs.

We use this to tailor our services and help improve local policies and practices.



£1.3 million

saved by government and public services last year. That's £4.68 for every £1 invested in our service.

This is Nina

Nina is one of the **2,670 people** we helped last year.

Nina's story shows how we help people solve their problems, and why this is important.



What we do

We help people with a range of problems including issues with housing, debt, benefits, employment, relationships and consumer rights. Last year we advised our clients on **7,480 issues** working **2,748 cases** during that time.

Sometimes people have more than one issue they need help with.



Nina was struggling – she had been working until lockdown with her spouse and disabled child in rented accommodation. Until the pandemic the family had been managing on Nina's wages and a top up from Universal Credit (UC). However, during lockdown Nina was first placed on furlough and then made redundant.

Whilst her UC would be increased, the sudden drop in income had a big impact on the family's situation.

How we help

People access us in different ways:



0.5%

face-to-face (see Note below)



55%

by telephone



35%

by webchat and email

Sam, our volunteer adviser, and Jo, our specialist money adviser, worked together to help Nina with her problem.

They were able to give advice on how Nina could maximize the family's income and on managing debts.

How we help

People often come to 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.

We can also arrange for food parcels to be delivered and last year we provided grants to **35 clients** totalling over **£1500** for those in fuel poverty. We also apply for grants to help families with various costs including school uniforms, white goods etc.



The advice provided set out the potential benefits the family were eligible for including: new style Job Seeker's Allowance, Council Tax Support and possibly Disability Living Allowance for their disabled child – something they had never considered applying to before.

The family also had an urgent need for gas and food supplies. We were able to provide a Wenceslas grant for the gas and arranged for the Foodbank to deliver a food parcel.

Our advice is effective

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

We help thousands of people like Nina.



8 in 10 people

said their problem was solved following advice, and 3 in 4 of them said they could not have resolved their problem without us



9 out of 10 people

said we helped them find a way forward

The difference this makes

The wider impact of advice – what we achieve as a result of solving problems and providing support – is just as important.



80%

said they felt less stress, depressed or anxious as a result of the help they received from us



Our advice helped stabilise Nina's financial situation.

She had become anxious due to her worry and concerns, which greatly reduced, and her physical health improved.

She also felt more confident and knowledgeable about handling similar problems in the future.

Our impact



Nearly 1 in 2

had more money or control of their finances



2 in 5

had a more secure housing situation



Nearly 1 in 2

felt their physical health had improved



5 in 10

found it easier to do their job or find a job



Nearly 1 in 2

felt they had better relationships with others



3 in 5

found it easier to manage day-to-day

Why fixing problems matters

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



9 in 10 people
we help say that their
problem negatively
affected their life



2 in 3 people
say they had difficulty
knowing who to contact
or how systems work
before advice



1 in 3 people
said their problem was
urgent when they came
to us

Our value to society

For every £1 invested in our service in 2020/21 so far, Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell generated:

£4.68

in savings to
government and
public services
(fiscal benefits)

**Total: £1.3
million**

£31.38

in wider economic
and social benefits
(public value)

**Total: £8.6
million**

£19.61

in financial value to
the people we help
(specific outcomes
to individuals)

**Total: £5.4
million**

How we calculate our financial value

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.

From our robust management information, we've also separately considered the financial benefits to the people we help.

- Keeping people in employment or helping them back to work
- Preventing housing evictions and statutory homelessness
- Reducing demand for mental health and GP services
- Improving mental wellbeing and positive functioning
- Improved family relationships

Our value to this community

Our savings to the public purse include:



£168,373

saved by local government,
through reducing
homelessness

Maximising the income for those we help prevents more costly intervention.

This helps reduce financial difficulty, promotes inclusion and benefits the economy.

This is only one fraction of our true value. We also:

- help clients negotiate local processes, such as welfare reform changes
- help local authority rent and council tax arrears to be rescheduled, and reduce the associated administrative costs

Where your money goes

The funding from EEBC is vital and helps us to achieve the outcomes already outlined, that make a real difference in the lives of our clients.

We use the funding to:

- Help towards our core costs including salaries (of a very small number of staff, overheads, training, quality assurance, supervision). We achieve **11x more than the funding provided** when looking at our financial outcomes.
- Support our specialist debt team, who this past year dealt with **250 cases achieving £480k for clients**, helping

them to **repay £213k of debt, mostly in rent and council tax.**

- Enable us to apply for funding as the core funding demonstrates our financial viability. As a result, **we have been able to 'stretch' the EEBC funding to support our specialist debt and mental health specialist teams, thereby helping more people.** In the last year, we have been successful in our bids for Henry Smith mental health funding, Community Foundation for Surrey homelessness support funding and Money and Pensions Service debt funding. All these would not have been possible without our EEBC core funding.

Impact of Covid-19

In March 2020, Covid-19 caused unprecedented challenges for our service and the people we help.

People continued to access quality advice through phone, webchat and online channels even when our service stopped delivering face to face support.



6,617

calls answered



Rising to the challenges of Covid-19

Despite the challenges presented, we:

Secured 1.4 mil in financial outcomes for our clients

Supported over 1100 clients with benefit issues

Recruited an additional 17 volunteers who along with our established volunteer group gave up over £500k worth of volunteering hours to help deliver our services.

Successfully adapted our service delivery model to phone, email and video conferencing.

Secured key COVID grants to enable us to support more people in debt and those at risk of homelessness.



Looking to the Future

We are always seeking new ways to improve our services, and ensure the EEBC funding is maximized. Ongoing funding over the next year will help us to:

- Expand our capacity on Adviceline – changing our service delivery model further to move from answering 50% to 80% of our call demand
- Broaden our partnership relationships - this will include more funded projects with other organisations to address anticipated increases in demand for debt and homelessness.
- Invest in our people, providing more training support to enable our service to be future proofed for what will be needed going forward.

