

South Hams Citizens Advice Bureau

Registered Charity No: 1091133



Annual Report 2010-2011

Behind the beauty



Abortion. Access to Children. Accidents. Appeals. Arrears. Equal Opportunities. Housing. Fines. Harassment. Health. Homelessness. Income Support. Minimum wage. Neighbour Disputes. Overpayments. Paternity Leave. Harassment . Rape. Redundancy . School Meals . Sick Leave. Small Claims. Licences. Time off Work. Missing people. Traders. Traffic Offences . Training . Transport - Expenses to & From. Tribunals. Unemployment. Unfair Dismissal. Utilities. VAT. Violence . Visas . Voluntary Work. Wages. War Pensions . Working Tax Credit

Lay hidden social issues

Our Aims

To provide the advice people need for the problems they face

To improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

And Principles

The Citizens Advice service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities.

It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

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Welcome

Last year, the Board recruited 5 new members who have brought with them a level of individual expertise and volunteer their time and energies for the benefit of the Bureau and its clients. During this year the trustees have come to understand the strengths and needs of the Bureau and worked hard to ensure a strong future. My thanks go to all the Board and also to retiring Trustees Susy Bottomley and Pam Barnes. Whilst the Bureau has been busier than ever so has the work of the Trustees!

Starting with the ongoing problem of our premises, last year we thought we had found an ideal site but after consideration felt we were unable to bear the costs of adapting the site to our needs. The Premises Sub Committee which includes members of the Board and advisers, staff and Emma spent many hours visiting alternatives to no avail. The South Hams District Council then offered the CAB space across the courtyard which will become vacant after reorganization. Following negotiations we are hopeful that a move will be possible in November. With our own designated entrance we hope our clients will find a right turn rather than left worth the extra space and comfort! My thanks to Paul Evans and Graham Meaden who have lead the negotiations, and to Nick Dilworth, Andrew Cushen, Dick Watson, Emma Handley for all their hard work towards providing staff and clients with a better, safer Bureau.

Citizens Advice are constantly looking at ways for clients to access the Bureau and the South Hams Trustees examined their proposal for an Advice Line, a one number telephone line that can offer information or advice and where necessary an appointment at their local Bureau. In a rural area where transport is limited the Trustees felt that joining the pilot scheme will lead to an effective alternative for our clients.

The Devon CAB Managers have always worked together in many ways but now the Bureaux have teamed up in a Devon CAB Consortium. This has several groups which look at the bigger picture for funding, costs and IT. I am very grateful to Emma, Paul Stanton and Veronica Davies for the work they have done towards making this Consortium work.

The Trustees are concerned by the potential loss of the Legal Services Contract. A 3 year contract was issued in 2010 and faces the axe under the suggested Legal Aid Reforms. Work done under this contract is highly specialized requiring time and expertise with many appeals, some potentially custodial and others continuing to become 'points of law'. The knowledge and working time that this team has is invaluable to the South Hams and Teignbridge and cannot easily be replaced. Thanks to Nick Dilworth who manages this project and for his work in highlighting the serious loss of justice, should this funding end.

Our thanks to our 'core' funders who provide almost a quarter of our running costs, Devon County Council, South Hams District Council, Totnes, Dartmouth, Ivybridge and Kingsbridge Town Councils and many Parish Councils. It is a local Bureau for local people and in the coming year needs increased funding to cover cuts and support our move to the new premises. If you hear a pot being jingled or an invitation to an event, please support us and remember that it all helps to provide a better and wider service for our community.

Finally, most important my thanks to the efforts and hard work of the volunteers, staff and particularly Emma during this year.

Liz Owen – Chair of Trustees

Social Policy

To quote Chris Hole, Citizens Advice Business Management Consultant when asked if Social Policy should be a Bureau twin aim he replied "it should be THE aim as it is an integral part of the process of helping clients". Evidence provided by our staff and volunteers is analysed by Citizens Advice at a national level who identify statistics and trends. It is this evidence which directly informs the policy recommendations Citizens Advice makes in their reports, submissions and proposals on Bills and briefings.

South Hams CAB have been able to provide Citizens Advice with evidence particularly with the Work Capability Assessment and the changes to ESA. These have contributed to the calls for evidence provided by the Citizens Advice to Professor Malcolm Harrington, commissioned by the Department of Work and Pensions to undertake an independent review of the Work Capability Assessment. His completed findings were accepted by the Government and changes put in place. The Bureaux are now asked to gather evidence on the impact of these recommendations for Citizens Advice for Professor Harrington's next report.

During this year Devon CABx have instigated surveys on contracts of employment and public transport. Nick Dilworth provided Sarah Wollaston MP with a social policy briefing "Transport problems in rural South Devon" and has led a vigorous campaign to highlight the loss to CAB clients should the cuts to Legal Aid funding be implemented. During the year evidence has also been provided on: High Fuel Costs and fuel poverty: Utilities: Bailiffs: Employment: ESA and Benefits and WTC.

The Impact

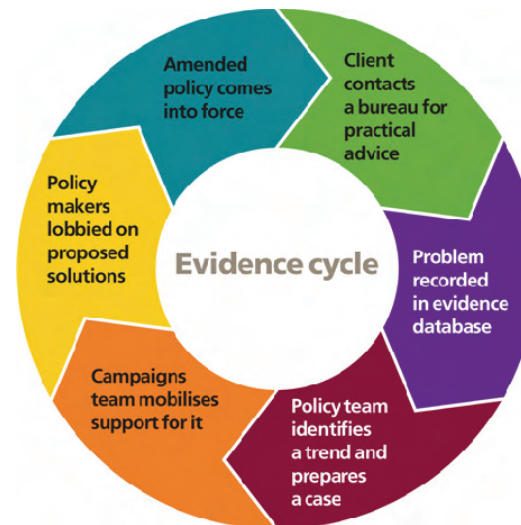
Here is a client case study showing the impact our advice has on our clients:

"I have been to CAB quite a few times over the years. I have always found the staff at CAB very helpful with full knowledge of any situation. My last visit was to once again try to get Disability Living Allowance. I have severe osteoarthritis and could hardly walk. I was in extreme pain and was on 2 crutches, it was costing an absolute fortune in taxis. I spoke to one of their Advisors and we filled the forms in together. I was this time awarded Disability Living Allowance thanks to the adviser & CAB.

I have also, in the past, found myself in debt and once again they took over and sorted it all out for me. I am now straight again and can sleep at nights.

If I had not received help from CAB I would definitely have finished up in hospital with a nervous breakdown, that is no lie, I was at breaking point with both of the above issues. I wouldn't say suicidal but very very close.

I think the government are barking up the wrong tree. With all these cuts people will need more help not less. If there is nowhere to go for help like CAB people will become ill and need hospitals which will cost the NHS more and more problems. They are hitting the vulnerable at a great cost."



More information on our campaigning work can be found at www.southhamscab.org.uk

Manager's Report



This has been a year of great anxiety and reward! We started it by securing the tender for legal aid work which is reported on page 7. Winning this contract was due to many years of hard work by our caseworkers and in particular Nick Dilworth whose heart and soul goes into making the contract a great success. More will be said on the legal aid reform later in this report but it is vitally important that people who need legal advice get help. Funding for quality advice and representation is under threat: With cuts coming

to all government spending, we are concerned access to justice will become even more restricted.

The Comprehensive Spending Review also gave some very serious warnings. Government Departments have been asked to identify savings of between 15-30%. Most CABs and indeed our umbrella organisation Citizens Advice are heavily financed through government grants, so as part of a strong voice across Devon, we reported the serious consequences of cutting frontline services such as ours. Devon County Council will be cutting our grant by 11%, but I am really pleased to say that South Hams District Council will keep their grant at the current rate and will also fund £10,000 for an outreach service that we will sustain each week in the coming year.

This has enabled us to meet our business plan objectives and we continue our plans from last year to improve access to our services: We moved to diagnostic interviews in March 2010. The new way of delivering our services did have an effect on our volunteer advisers due to changes in how they were asked to operate, so it has been a challenging year. Looking to the future we will be able to decide on the best next steps for clients and use our audited quality advice service for those in greatest need. In May 2011 we will be joining

the Citizens Advice single telephone number project – Adviceline. We will be joining with Teignbridge and West Devon CAB to answer our telephones across the three areas. In October 2011 we will be moving to a new case recording system, so we are not standing still and hope that all our volunteers stick with us through these changing times!

As always I would like to thank all our volunteers (including trustees) and paid staff for their dedication and loyalty to the bureau and their clients. In May, one of volunteers attended a volunteer reception at St James's Palace and met Princess Anne (pictures and more information on page 9).

In April 2010, we were successful in securing funding from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to offer face-to-face advice on the whole range of HMRC products to bureau clients in outreaches (Kingsbridge, Dartmouth and Ivybridge); through home visits and to raise awareness within the bureau and externally through sessions in particular to disadvantaged and hard to reach groups. See the full project report on our website: www.southhamscab.org.uk.

As part of our social policy work, we will monitor the effects of new government policy both locally and nationally. Read further on to find out more about our campaigning work.

To round up the year with statistics, it has been a difficult year to assess! We reduced our hours of opening from 5 days to 4 in November which had an effect on the number of people dealt with, but we still saw a 19% increase in the number of enquiries. Yet again, we saw an increase in benefit work of 16% compared with the previous year. Find out more on page 10.

Emma Handley – Bureau Manager

The future of legal aid funding for vital social welfare law services hangs in the balance

By Nick Dilworth



Not many people know that for over a decade; a large number of Citizens Advice Bureau have been funded by the Legal Service Commission to provide legal aid. It was seen as one of the most far reaching and innovative initiatives which evolved out of the 1999 Access to Justice Act. With the introduction of the Community Legal Service, Bureaux were at long last recognised for their increasing specialism in the delivery of advice across the social welfare spectrum.



“Taking our case to Westminster”.

Big Ben’s deafening chimes echo whilst governments’ reforms move ahead at relentless speed

Not many people know that for over a decade; a large number of Citizens Advice Bureau have been funded by the Legal Service Commission to provide legal aid. It was seen as one of

In our case we have held a contract with the legal services commission since 1999 which has gone from strength to strength. Over the years we’ve grown from a small contract when I worked as a part time supervisor with an even more part time admin worker; in recognition of increasing demand we have grown in capacity and now have the largest welfare benefits contract in the county, we successfully bid for a new style consortium contract with other Devon CAB and Shelter to become the predominant access point in the areas of highly specialised debt, welfare benefit and housing advice. This extends to access to family & employment law in conjunction with our solicitor counterparts with whom we have always maintained excellent working relations.

It therefore came as a huge blow to learn that the incoming coalition government proposed massive cuts as part of their comprehensive savings review last October which announced cuts of £350 million pounds in the legal aid budget; it was even more of a shock to learn that the biggest casualty would be social welfare law. The cuts will see welfare benefits advice as no longer accessible under the scheme from October 2012; what’s more debt and housing advice will be cut back to situations where you can only get help if you are in imminent danger of losing your home. It seems hard to understand why the Community Legal Service is being disbanded at a time when the economy is so fragile. In our case it has a disastrous consequence which could take 65% of all bureau funds away.

In my view these cuts are not only socially regressive but morally incomprehensible. And so our intensive campaign against these damaging reforms started. It’s required a huge amount of effort in responding to government’s consultation by way of a full 93 page submission, it was one of 5,000 responses received by the Ministry

Join the Justice for All campaign at: www.justiceforall.org.uk

of Justice who sadly have so far shown little sign of listening to widespread condemnation. In January of this year we went to parliament for the launch of the 'Justice for All' campaign. We lobbied four county MPs and provided them all with a full briefing paper on the work we do and what we saw as some viable alternatives. It's been a relentless and non-stop battle ever since!



Day of Action – Totnes 3rd June
Attended by Sarah Wollaston MP

We have lobbied our own MP Sarah Wollaston intensively and I am pleased that she was able to raise awareness of our plight by way of an intervention in the second reading of the Legal Aid, Sentencing & Punishment of Offender's Bill in the House of Commons.

The following day it was over to East London and the very plush space age offices

of Allen & Over where I attended a question time event attended by key players in the world of legal aid. I was delighted to get to ask our legal aid minister Jonathon Djanogly a question as to whether the reforms marked the abolition of the Community Legal Services. In front of a packed audience he assured me they did not, but the recent second reading of the bill tells me otherwise. It has been remarked in the press that Mr Djanogly was 'all tied up in knots' at the meeting; - a view with which I very much agree.

I also wrote an article for the New Statesman magazine "Tales from the Frontline", it was very satisfying to see this on sale in newsagents. The campaign has brought me into the world of 'blogging', social media was all a bit alien to me but I've now written literally hundreds of articles on on-line forums including:



Nick addresses the shadow justice minister Andy Slaughter, Lord Bach & other cross party ministers in the Houses of Parliament in March

illegal.org.uk and Mylegal.org.uk; - it's been immensely satisfying to see some of them twittered around the legal network and linked to the Justice for All website. It's been relentless, exciting, depressing, even exhausting at times, but I'm convinced it's a battle worth fighting for. We had a very successful 'day of action' at the Mansion House in Totnes on the 3rd June. It coincided with the Justice for All campaign and attracted a good audience of community organisations, culminating in a question and answer session with Sarah Wollaston who kindly agreed to attend. In answer to a request for a show of hands, everyone in the room indicated government must rethink its plans on such damaging abolition of legal aid. Our next mission is to get a 'Lord on Board'; Baroness Judith Jolly has indicated she will listen to us as the reforms proceeds to the lords in this autumn. There's still much to be done, far too much to mention here. And so the battle continues, often into the early hours, there's lots going on behind the scenes. We need people to tell their MP's and councillors to contest these reforms; unless they do so there is an inherent danger that as far as special advice is concerned this really will take the Citizen out of the Advice Bureau, let's not leave it too late.



Question time event at Allen & Over in London with Jonathon Djanogly, Lord Bach and many other prominent people - 17th March

Legal Services



The year 2010/2011 can perhaps best be described as something of an obstacle course; it's been without doubt the most difficult year I can recollect in my 12 years with the bureau. To my frustration the obstacles have at times stood in the way of delivering the service which otherwise serves our clients so well. I'm always of the belief that we should never allow this to compromise the quality of advice but it is a difficult equilibrium at times. Ultimately, what drives us in CAB is a

passionate commitment to helping those who hit problems and who need a touch of our expertise in empowering them to work their way forward.

The year started off with a nail biting wait to hear if we'd been awarded a new style consortium contract with our funders the Legal Service Commission (LSC). This involved a great deal of hard work in the years building up to the contract; I well remember attending a meeting with the LSC over five years ago when we were promised that the end result would be "worth it", that those who proved their worth, delivered the results and worked hard would be awarded a contract and how we'd be cut free from endless bureaucracy and allowed to get on with it; that's what we were told! I was therefore delighted to learn that our contract bid with all Devon CAB and the national housing charity Shelter was successful. I'm indebted to Emma and the Devon management team for the work they put in to ensure we got the contract. It was very satisfying to learn we'd been ranked as a number one provider and awarded the largest legal aid contract for welfare benefits in the County. It also meant our patch was now extended to serving the Teignbridge and Torbay areas as well as the South Hams.

I've always believed in remaining optimistic, even in the face of adversity. I've always refused to adopt the negative approach that some providers have had over their legal aid contracts. On our part our contract has gone from strength to strength and our relationship with the commission has always been very pleasurable, business like and professional. As I see it the entrusting of legal aid work to CAB has done nothing but good, it's raised our profile and meant that we've been able to offer a highly specialised service to our clients in very complex welfare benefit and debt work. The new contract was designed to take us into a new era of being able to offer our clients an even more holistic access path to a package of social welfare law issues which clients so often present with. In our case the joint working with Shelter enables us to provide specialist housing, welfare benefits and debt help all under one roof. We've also continued to maintain an excellent working relationship with other stakeholders and partners who work within the Community Legal and Criminal Defence Service under the LSC framework.

I'm extremely grateful to Hooper & Wollen solicitors who we are able to refer our family and employment work to and also to Glanville Robinson solicitors of Devonport who we work in conjunction with when dealing with benefit fraud related cases. It's one of our specialist and most complex areas. The media has given benefit cheats a pronounced coverage over the last year but the reality is that less than 1% of the entire benefit count is established as actual fraud. In the majority of cases it's the complexity of the system which leads to claimant confusion and by explaining this to our partners in criminal defence we have been able to avert legal proceedings and assist in securing acquittals when our clients have been wrongly accused.

**Community
Legal Service**



We continue to get exceptionally good results in both the County Court and the First Tier and Upper Tribunals. I took two important cases to London which although not fully successful led to important and binding precedent being set; most notably one over the interpretation of the controversial Employment & Support Allowance. In this case I challenged the way the work capability assessment was being considered by the Tribunal, my argument was that Tribunals should look for claimants who have a limitation and need support to help them find employment rather than consider cases as a means of determining whether a claimant is capable or unable to work. I also challenged the formality of the courtrooms as a suitable venue for social security Tribunals. The upper tribunal judges in both cases considered there was merit in the argument but couldn't apply it in each particular case. I should mention that we've had successes in numerous other Upper Tribunal cases and I'm pleased that one of the judgements is posted on the 'Rightsnet' website; - a premier source of reference to welfare benefit specialists.

the future of legal aid since our incoming government decided to wield the axe in our direction. I deal with this more extensively in my 'Justice for All' report.

I make a special point in singling out Alan who works with us a volunteer debt caseworker and has done for many years. Alan's commitment is hard to match and is greatly appreciated, sadly my work outside of the office in our extended districts means I get to see little of him these days.



One of the most topical presenting problems in the last year has been the ESA caseload. The number of appeals has shot up by a massive 167% since 2008, there are huge injustices in the medical assessment process and my hope is government does something to address this. The Debt Relief Orders implemented in 2009 are now working well and providing many of our clients with an excellent solution where no alternative remedy is available.

The service in general is undergoing immense change, it's difficult to work within financial constraint but it is necessary to move with the times. I do not envy our volunteers in having to adapt to so much change and in this regard it is very much my hope that we can lighten their load by being able to continue to offer a face to face service for those who present with problems requiring specialist advice. I would also like to thank them and our consortium partners for referring cases in our direction.

In conclusion, I am immensely proud of the work we do and feel we are part of a very effective community legal service with excellent links to other organisations. We all work well together and I find it totally incomprehensible that our future legal aid funding is so seriously under threat.

Nick Dilworth – LSC Casework Supervisor



*The LSC team:
Top
middle
Nick
Dilworth,
from left
to right,
Sarah,
Christine,
Viv,
Linda,
Debra.*

No annual report would be complete without a huge thank you to my hard working team, Viv, Christine, Linda, Sarah and Debra (who joined us last November). They continue to work well under pressure and whilst an uncertainty which hangs over us in terms of

Our Volunteers

The CAB relies heavily on volunteer time, but also commitment and energy to deliver the service to the public. This has been a challenging year for the volunteers due to changes in service delivery and the demands put upon them. Thank you to all our volunteers who give up their free time and the best of luck to those who have left us this year.

Abigail C	Alan C	Andrew C	Andy G	Ann H*
Bridget D	Caroline H	Carolyn M	Chryz C	Clare G
Daphne J	David C	David W*	Douglas M*	Frances A
Gaye A	Gill F	Jane B	Jane H	Jill T
John S*	Julia W*	Kate M	Linda M	Lorraine E
Marian H	Michael W	Michele B	Linda T	Malcolm S
Nicola C	Pamela R*	Rod S	Rosie C	Sally D
Sally H*	Steve W	Susan J	Susan S	Tim B
Victoria N*				

*Left during the year

Welcome to:

Amanda F	Angela M	Brian H	Helen S	James S
Maggie K	Martin R	Pippa P	Rebecca R	Scarlett P
Shelagh P	Steve T	Susan S		

Thank you to Bridget Dick and Frances Ansell for representing the volunteers at the monthly Board meetings.

Celebrating 70 years of volunteering

HRH The Princess Royal hosted a volunteers' reception for 100 volunteers at St James's Palace to celebrate and recognise 70 years of volunteering in CAB.



Michael, one of our volunteers entered in to the ballot to attend and was chosen from hundreds of volunteers across the country.

The night itself was a huge success with volunteers from all over the country gathered in the palace, sharing stories and experiences.

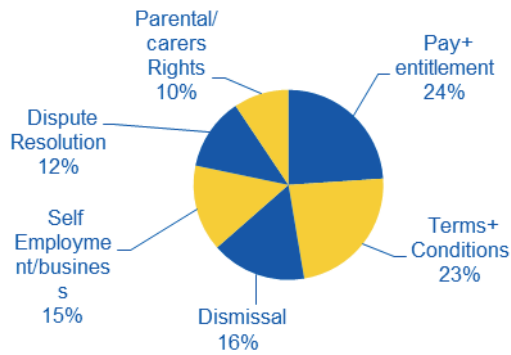
The night began with an opening speech from John Gladwin, Chair of the Citizens Advice Trustee Board, followed by an inspiring speech from HRH The Princess Royal herself. After the speeches followed drinks and canapés and HRH The Princess Royal making her way around the room to speak with each volunteer.

A quote from one of our volunteers

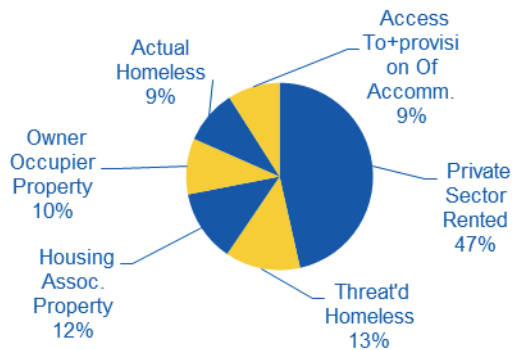
“It really has been a very helpful and interesting experience for me coming in on a regular basis, and I feel I've benefited in numerous ways, not only learning new skills and refreshing old ones, and also gaining confidence, but it's also been very enjoyable working with such a nice team of people. It really does feel that my involvement with the CAB has been an important stepping stone for me, in to the world of work again”.

Bureau Key Statistics and figures

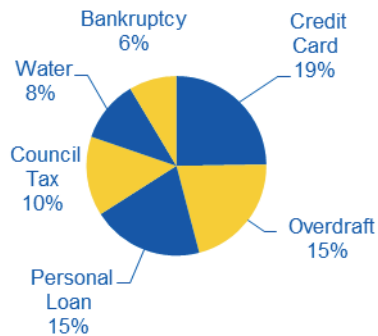
Breakdown of Top 6 Employment Issues



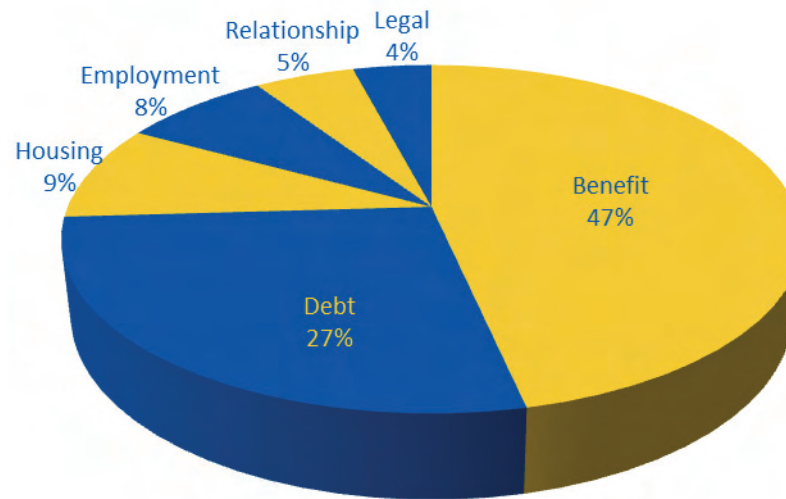
Breakdown of Top 6 Housing Issues



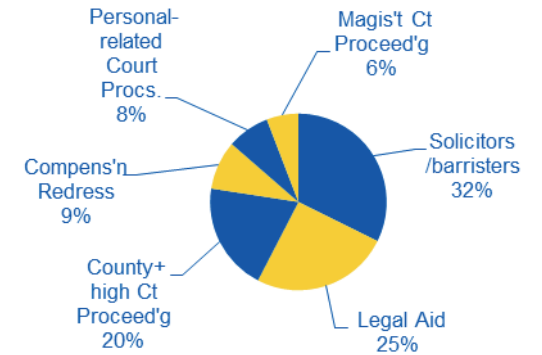
Breakdown of Top 6 Debt Issues



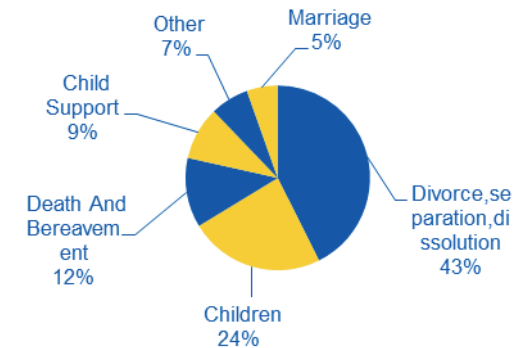
Top 6 Annual New Enquiry Issues



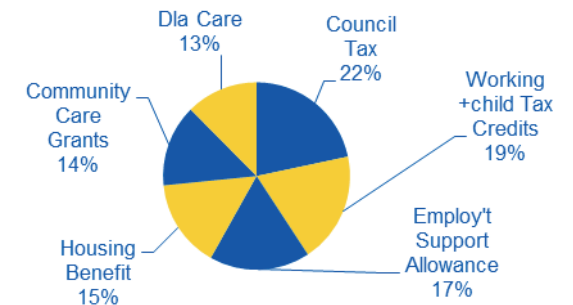
Breakdown of Top 6 Legal Issues



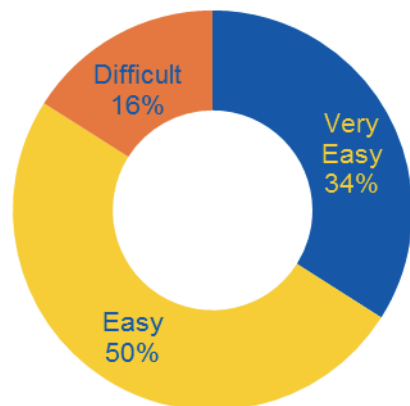
Breakdown of Top 6 Relationship Issues



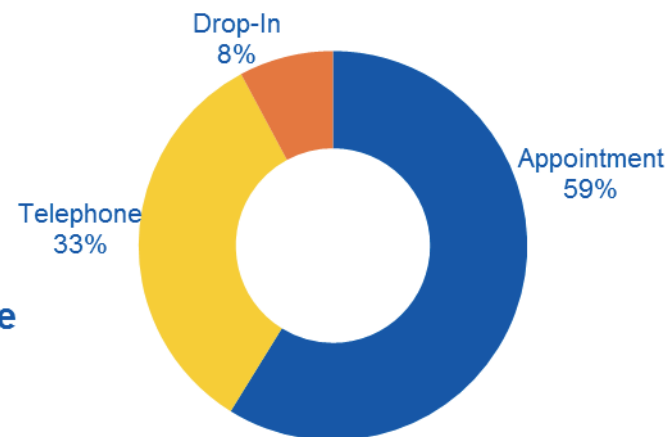
Breakdown of Top 6 Benefit Issues



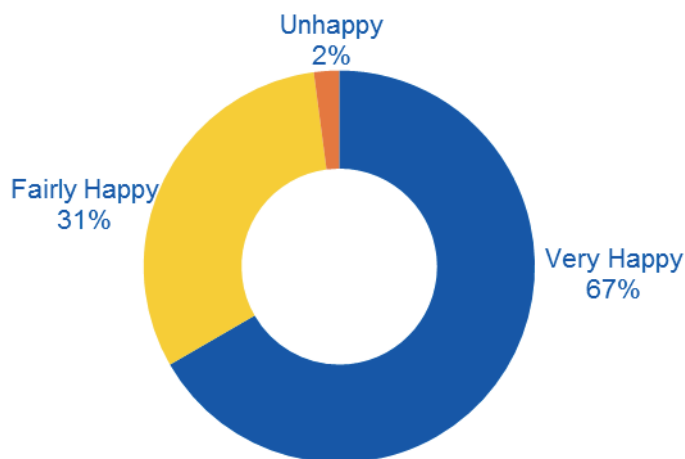
How easy was it to get through?



How would you like advice delivered?



How happy are you with the advice you have received?



60% of our clients were female

19% of our clients stated they had a disability

95% of our clients stated they were White British

The Bureau made over £1.5 million of financial gains for clients – money that is circulated in the local economy

Project Work

Income Maximisation

Our partnership with South Hams District Council and Tor Homes continues with our adviser Richard Lines taking direct enquiries on benefit and debt issues. Advice ranges from helping people manage their money better, reschedule debts or negotiate payments with creditors. It also assesses whether extra income can be sought for the client through securing benefit or perhaps through encouraging extra hours at work.

This invaluable work helps to put people back on track and stops the need for the council to take drastic action in recovery of council tax benefit. It also helps people stay in their homes and reduces the need for re-possession action. Thank you to both organisations for funding this project.

This partnership working is invaluable to people in the South Hams so that they get the advice when it is most needed. Both Tor Homes and SHDC recognise that people require independent and impartial advice; that clients can be assured of confidentiality and that information will only be shared with direct consent from the client.

Citizens Advice HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Project

This project was funded by Citizens Advice through HMRC for one year and enabled the bureau to target groups of people who may not normally access a bureau. This uncovered many situations of people struggling with overpayments of Tax Credits and great difficulty of gaining access to HMRC staff to resolve issues.



South Hams has a significantly high proportion of self-employed people on low incomes and this project has targeted them and helped them to understand their responsibilities in keeping accounts, how to present tax returns and how to maximise income when self-employed.

We have been working with the children's centre in Ivybridge and provided advice to families with young children and single parents. A social policy report is available for this project upon request.

Training

Over the past year I have trained 3 groups of volunteers to be Gateway Assessors. The groups were small and totalled only 15, but the size of the bureau restricts the number of trainees that can be accommodated. Hopefully with larger premises this number can be increased. All 15 of those trainees completed the initial training but not all have gone on to become fully competent Gateway Assessors. The main reasons being personal or ill health. This makes deciding when to undertake training difficult and can result in either a 'feast or famine' situation regarding the number of volunteers readily available to offer their time to the bureau.

The basic Gateway Assessor course has now been running in this bureau for 1.5 yrs and has steadily developed and improved over that time. Feedback from the trainees has been really useful in maintaining a quality up-to-date course that the trainees enjoy and feel they provide a real service to the community.

Caroline Hayman – Training Supervisor

Trustees, Board Members

Trustees and Board Members

We are grateful to the Trustees and others who have served on the Trustee Board during the year to 31 March 2011:

Chair	Liz Owen
Vice Chair	Anna Brownlow
Treasurer	David Goode
Secretary	Anna Brownlow
Trustees	Graham Meaden Liz Hitchins Paul Evans Paul Stanton Peter Love Susy Bottomley* Veronica Davies Zoe Oldman
Representatives: Council	Cllr. M. Howarth Cllr. A. Khong* Cllr. D. Gent Cllr. C. Robillard*
Citizens Advice	Chris Hole
Bureau members	Emma Handley Lesley Crooks Nick Dilworth Bridget Dick/Frances Ansell Caroline Hayman

*Left during the year

Paid Staff

Staffing Bureau

Providing a Quality Marked service, and meeting the requirements of our parent body, Citizens Advice, necessitates employing professional staff as follows:

	Bureau Core
Full Time	
Bureau Manager	Emma Handley
Part Time	
Supervisors	Sharon Mudge Allison Quick
Supervisor Cover	Carolyn Machin
Accounts	Lesley Crooks
	Legal Services Contract
Full Time	
Contract Manager	Nick Dilworth
Caseworkers	Viv Oxley, Linda Shilan, Debra Ward
Volunteer	Alan Cooper
Part Time	
Admin:	Christine Benton Sarah Ingram
	Projects
Income maximisation	Richard Lines
HMRC	Lin Etherden
	Training/Volunteer Support
Guidance Tutor	Caroline Hayman
Volunteer Support Officer	Lynne Baker

Torquay County Court Outreach Service



It's one of the courts which has to deal with the highest number of personal bankruptcies in the country; - despite all the surrounding affluence.

The Court outreach at Torquay & Newton Abbot County Court continues to serve our clients well.

The staff often remark on how helpful it is to have us there on hand to sort out anything which comes in through the door, it can range from a bankruptcy, an enquiry over benefits to an emergency application to prevent an eviction.

The Court staff and judges are to be commended for their ever helpful attitude and the way they always put court users at ease; often amid the person and difficult circumstances which bring people to court for all manner of reasons.

The need for the service is all the more, now that HM Courts Service has merged with the Tribunals Service, it means that many of our client's benefit appeals are now being heard much nearer to where they live, avoiding the need to travel to Exeter or Plymouth. The merger puts an additional strain on the court as does the many thousands of benefit appeals which clients are making against endless adverse benefit decisions.

Children's Centre

With funding from Dartmouth and Kingsbridge Children's Centre we undertook a small project advising in the centre once per week for a few months. This project was aimed at families needing our advice services within the known environment of the Children's Centre. Most enquiries were around income maximisation, in particular tax credits and maternity payments.

Parents were using the service who would not have contacted the bureau through other routes; the value of this work was immense for those people we helped.

Treasurer's Report

In what is regrettably becoming a regular occurrence, funding for 2010-11 was challenging. Ultimately however, we received total income at similar levels to the previous year for which we thank all our funders and supporters. As has traditionally been the case expenditure has been consistently reviewed and kept to tight but realistic levels. We ended the financial year with balanced accounts, as budgeted.

Currently 2011-12 looks demanding and we may well be grateful for our prudently accumulated reserves.

Thanks as always goes to Lesley our accounts technician for maintaining our management accounts in such good order.

Notes to the Summary of Accounts shown on opposite page:

1. Full copies of the audited accounts and Trustees Report are available from The Manager at the Bureau (address on page 16)
2. Auditors: WR Frost & Co., Riverside, Ashburton Road, Totnes, TQ9 5JU

Accounts Summary - 2010/2011

Funding Sources

Description	Core	Restricted/ Projects	Total
South Hams District Council	41867		41867
Devon County Council	37840		37840
Town Councils	5250		5250
Parish Councils	2040		2040
Legal Services		131726	131726
South Hams District Council Income Maximisation		19500	19500
BERR/HMT AHAP** in partnership with Citizens Advice		18214	18214
Awards For All		5000	5000
HMRC		10000	10000
Dart/Kingsbidge Children's Centre		3000	3000
Tor Homes		8000	8000
Citizens Advice	708		708
Donations	1007		1009
Sarah Fogwell Trust	2000		2000
Fundraising	1971		1971
Interest	266		266
Inland Revenue	175		175
TOTAL INCOME	93124	195442	288566

Expenditure

Description	Core	Restricted/ Projects	Total
Rents	3111	4724	7835
Premises Service Charges	4775	5206	9981
Insurance	807	1485	2292
Telephone	1701	2138	3839
Post, Stat, Copying	1584	4263	5847
Office Expenses	523	999	1522
Travel	4503	7724	12227
Training	950	1459	2409
Information systems	303	1088	1391
Equipment/Depreciation	2410	1093	3503
Accounts /Prof Fees/Audit	5997	4650	10647
Equipment leases	632	1013	1645
Salaries	52902	159693	212595
Citizens Advice Membership	1623	2007	3630
Other expenditure	127	9374	9501
Fundraising	114		114
Transfer	-445	445	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	81617	207361	288978
INCOME LESS EXPENDITURE	11507	-11919	-412

Thank you to all our funders. Core grant: Devon County Council; South Hams District Council; Town and Parish Councils*. **Project funding:** Tor Homes; South Hams District Council Customer Services; Citizens Advice/HMRC; BERR/HMT **Additional Hours Advice Project in partnership with Citizens Advice; Dartmouth and Kingbridge Children's Centre. **Contracts:** Legal Services Commission. Thank you, also, to all those who made individual donations to the bureau including the Sarah Wood Fogwell Trust. *Ashprington, Berry Pomeroy, Bigbury, Brixton, Chivelstone, Cornwood, Cornworthy, Dartington, Dean Prior, Diptford, East Allington, East Portlemouth, Harford, Holbeton, Kingswear, Malborough, Marldon, Modbury, Newton & Noss, Rattery, Shaugh Prior, South Brent, South Huish, Staverton, Stoke Fleming, Stoke Gabriel, Strete, Ugborough. Dartmouth, Ivybridge, Kingsbridge and Totnes Town Councils.

Opening hours and contact information

Monday to Thursday from 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm

Bureau Phone Number
08 444 111 444

Legal Aid Phone Number
01803 863129

Email

advice@southhamscab.org.uk

Visit

Dartmouth Medical Practice, DARTMOUTH. Wednesday am (appointment only)

The Cottage, Plymouth Road, TOTNES. Monday to Thursday

Quay House, Ilbert Road, KINGSBRIDGE. Wednesday am (Drop in 10am – 11am, appointments from 11am)

Watermark, Erme Court, IVYBRIDGE. Monday am (Drop in 10am – 11am, appointments from 11am)

Web sites

www.southhamscab.org.uk

www.adviceguide.org.uk

Devon Legal Aid

www.legalaiddevon.org.uk

South Hams Citizens Advice Bureau, The Cottage, Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5NE