



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORT

<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY</b>	Citizens Advice
<b>BRIEF REPORT</b>	
<p>The current trend is a return to face to face work - a number of vulnerable clients have been seen in the Stroud office, in our outreaches and in community hubs.</p> <p><b>Outreach work</b> There is strong committed to outreach work, especially as issues with public transport continue and the cost of living crisis affects the majority of our clients.</p> <p>Our Dursley outreach continues to be open for face to face advice one day per week. We have also set up appointments with our specialist debt, benefits and family advisers there which has meant that clients do not have to travel to the Stroud office for specialist advice.</p> <p>Our attendance at the Paganhill Community Café once a month has been a success and we are increasing our presence to two sessions per month.</p> <p>We have returned to outreach work at Stonehouse APT and plan to return to Stonehouse Town Council as soon as an available adviser can be found. We are setting up our Wotton outreach in the Keepers Hub and continue to look at how we can best work with hubs to increase access to advice.</p> <p><b>Stroud District Foodbank</b> The dedicated foodbank adviser Rachel is now advising clients referred to her by the Stroud Foodbank. Rachel advises clients by email, telephone and in person. Rachel sees clients in our Stroud office, outreaches and has also seen clients in community hubs.</p> <p><b>Research</b> As a service CitA have a huge amount of insight and data about the problems, clients and their wider communities face. Internally this insight is used to help shape the organization so that it best meets client needs but can also be used to inform partner organisations such as SDC.</p> <p>Our local group has been focusing on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local Authority Housing and Homelessness – and setting up links with SDC.</li><li>• Disrepair in rented property particularly with Housing Associations.</li><li>• The effects of Digital Exclusion</li></ul>	

- Problems with Benefit claims - more recently looking at the problems with delayed State Retirement Pensions payments and problems that clients experience as they reach pension age because of the 'Mixed Aged Couples' rules affecting other benefits
- Difficulties caused by the cost of living crisis

**Crisis Fund**

The majority of CitA's debt caseload consists of Stroud clients. They are currently looking at options to top up a crisis fund which until now has been met by private donations. A small amount of money can often really help a client in crisis and Elizabeth Hall would be interested in talking with appropriate SDC officers regarding any support that might be given.

**Data**

Ward breakdown can be found at Appendix A.  
Key statistics can be found at Appendix B.

<b>REPORT SUBMITTED BY</b>	Cllr Gordon Craig
<b>DATE</b>	12 June 2022