

2007/8

EAST DORSET

Citizens Advice Bureaux

employment • debts • legal • housing • relationships • benefits • consumer • immigration



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.

The service aims:

- ✓ *To provide the advice people need for the problems they face.*
- ✓ *To improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.*

**citizens
advice
bureau**



ELECTED MEMBERS

Alan Honnor
Chairman

Maureen Godfrey
Vice Chairman

Helen Sturdy
Treasurer

John Rynne
Company Secretary

Diann March

REPRESENTATIVE MEMBERS

Barbara Manuel
East Dorset District Council

David Morgan
East Dorset District Council

Mike Daymond
Verwood Town Council

Robin Cook
Wimborne Town Council

Albert Whittle
Wimborne & Ferndown
Lions Club

John Muggleton
Ferndown Town Council

STAFF MEMBERS

Hilary Forrest
Bureau Manager

Pat Temple
Advice Services Manager

Kathryn Finn
Staff Representative (W)

Ann Walker
Staff Representative (F)

AUDITOR

Princecroft Willis

Chairman's Report

Funding, funding, funding!

Looking through the reports I have given over the past ten years I found, not unexpectedly, one problem which has been with us consistently - that is of course finance - or more correctly the lack of it. As I write this year's report I am pleased to say that our financial situation is such that I fully expect us to be able to maintain the current level of service we give to our clients during 2008/9. We will however face a very big problem when our funding from the Big Lottery comes to an end in March 2009, for unless we can obtain additional financing to replace this grant, we will have to reduce our expenditure substantially, which will obviously have the effect of reducing the service we can offer. We have faced similar problems in the past when we have been successful in obtaining alternative financing, and currently we are actively pursuing every possible avenue in the hope of making up this shortfall.

Partnership working

CABx are likely to face some fairly major operational changes over the months ahead, particularly as the current trend in financing is to offer grants to consortiums and groups able to cover larger geographical areas rather than single units operating in smaller areas. We are already in discussion with other Bureaux and organisations operating in Dorset to ensure that we are included in any relevant programmes in the County.

An unfortunate sign of the times is the very substantial increase in clients with debt problems - currently representing 20% of our work load. The organisation Shelter is being funded to offer advice to those clients with debt problems

who are on some Welfare Benefits. This means that we can refer such clients to them, thereby freeing Advisers to undertake other, equally important, cases and is one example of the advantages of Bureaux co-operating with other organisations, a policy which is likely to be expanded in the future.

Long service

As regular attendees to our Annual meetings will be aware, every year I have the privilege of presenting long service certificates to both staff and volunteers, and this year is no exception. Without the dedication and support of both our staff and volunteers it would certainly not be possible to offer such a comprehensive advisory service to clients within the relatively small budget with which we operate, therefore without them there would be no service.



During the past year our Manager Hilary Forrest celebrated 25 years with the EDCAB. I have worked with Hilary for ten of those years, and not only has she given me tremendous support but she has demonstrated time and again the dedication to which I refer above, and has been instrumental in setting the high standards which have become the norm for the EDCAB.

Thank you...

As usual I close my report by expressing my grateful thanks to all those who have supported us over the past year, including the EDDC, Dorset County Council, Town and Parish Councils, the Lions, Rotary and all the others whose support is so much appreciated, including of course the Big Lottery.

Alan Honnor

Manager's Report

25 years of History

This year has been something of a milestone for me, as in January I celebrated 25 years in the CAB service in East Dorset, and was touched by the tributes that were paid at a surprise presentation, not to mention the balloon and champagne! Maggie Pope gave a review of my time here which was especially pleasing as Maggie was the first volunteer I took on; she subsequently supported me as Deputy Manager for many years, and returned to us as a volunteer Debt Adviser after retirement.

It was fitting to be reminded of all the changes that have taken place and how these have led to the development of the service in East Dorset in so many ways. The quality of service we give clients today was undreamt of when I joined, when all that was needed was an Adviser, a paper Information file and a Day-book to record the interview in a couple of lines. Supervisors were unheard of, training took place before trainees were interviewed for suitability. Training consisted of one day per subject over 8 weeks. There were no computers, not even an electric typewriter. The only Bureau was in Wimborne, with one office and 2 small interview rooms in Church St and it closed for lunch from 12.30 – 2pm. The Manager (known then as 'Organiser') was paid an Honorarium of £500 per year for a 20 hour week.

Services today

We now have purpose-designed offices in Wimborne and Ferndown, operate from the Doctor's surgery in Verwood and Cranborne, have an outreach at Heatherlands Centre, a Rural Outreach Home Visitor, a Money Advice specialist, a Training Officer, an Advice Manager, 2 paid supervisors, and an Office Manager. We are about to re-start the outreach service at Verwood library. We provide an advice-line for another Charity, CGD. We also ran the Blandford office for 5 years before setting up an independent CAB in North Dorset.

Who does what?

Volunteers now perform a huge range of different roles. Advisers are supported by receptionists and Telephone Assistants, six Advisers offer Telephone Advice. Four Advisers double up as Supervisors to cover training and holidays, and Pat Anderson (who has also been with us for over 20 years) has been a regular, weekly volunteer Supervisor for 7 years.

There is a supporting army of volunteers who help with everything - IT, letters, leaflet stocks, and local research - and without whom we could not function. Then there are the Friends of EDCAB and the Trustees. It is run for the community by the community.

New this year

Specific developments this year have included the re-launch of the Money Box scheme (formerly Financial Health Check) for residents of East Dorset Housing Association, and the continuation of the Heatherlands Project. Sadly the service at Sixpenny Handley GP practice has been discontinued, but the new CARDS project (Citizens Advice for Rural Dorset Service) funded by the Big Lottery and involving all 8 Dorset CABs, has given us additional resources for a Rural Outreach Adviser to do home visits.

Partnership Working

Working in partnership with other agencies will certainly be the way forward and we are planning to share our Training Officer with Christchurch CAB from April. We have also started putting on Training Courses and selling places to other Bureaux, to fill the gap left by Citizens Advice.

Partnership working also means involvement in Community and Strategic Partnerships in Dorset and East Dorset, affecting Housing, Domestic Violence, Children and Young People, and other

matters. In order to work with them more effectively and respond to opportunities we may need to consider even closer working with other CABs, possibly setting up a new single entity to represent all our interests.

What next?

There are undoubtedly still challenges ahead, and I have no doubt I can rely on the team at EDCAB, Trustees, staff and volunteers to meet those challenges with energy and enthusiasm.



Hilary Forrest

Thanks go to the following staff meeting speakers:-

Sarah Smith

Southern Focus Trust

Angela Truell

Disability Rights Project

Sue Whitehead,

Pete Murray

Wessex Water

Lynn Kenchington

Anchor Staying Put

Gillian Dawson

Involving clients in Social Policy

Dep DJ Robert Unwin

Defending Court action for debt

Colin Swain

EDDC - Local Housing Allowance

Nick Hancock

RWPS -Harassment at work

Ivan Hancock

Dorset Trading Standards

Annual Report & Accounts 2007/2008

2006/2007 (£)	INCOME	2007/2008 (£)
	Grants and Donations	
62,750	East Dorset District Council	64,000
682	East Dorset District Council IT Systems	1,354
6,146	Dorset County Council	7,387
1,120	Citizens Advice	
11,763	Primary Health Care Trusts	10,482
37,749	The Big Lottery Fund	45,544
5,635	Friends of East Dorset CAB	12,099
750	Wimborne and Ferndown Lions club	1,000
600	Rotary and Inner Wheel	750
7,878	Wessex Water	8,068
6,992	Local Network Fund	
2,000	East Dorset Housing Association	4,500
1,798	Client and general public donations	1,934
331	Training and room hire fees	580
	East Dorset Educational Partnership	500
	Town Councils	
4,000	Wimborne	4,000
5,500	Ferndown	5,500
1,500	Verwood	1,500
	Parish Councils	
1,000	Colehill	1,000
250	Corfe Mullen	200
200	West Parley	200
150	Holt	150
300	St.Leonards and St. Ives	400
150	West Moors	100
90	Sixpenny Handley with Pentridge	225
50	Cranborne	50
7,366	Bank Interest	10,506
	Other Income	405
166,750	Total	182,434
	EXPENDITURE	
118,144	Salaries, Pensions, National Insurance and Other Staff Costs	125,612
1,624	Training	1,309
7,291	Travelling Expenses and Car Parking	7,693
6,066	Telephone	6,313
3,845	Postage, Printing and Stationery	2,897
1,657	Wimborne Premises	1,949
10,659	Ferndown Premises	12,116
1,735	Insurance	1,142
1,013	Equipment, Repairs and Renewals	619
4,418	Citizens Advice and Leaflets	4,775
930	Computer equipment	1,411
688	Audit Fee	625
700	Miscellaneous	1,538
	Fundraising costs	815
158,770	Total	168,814
	SURPLUS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	
12,626	Increase in General Reserves	16,068
-4,645	Increase/Decrease in Restricted Reserves	-2,448
7,981	Total	13,620
	BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2008	
31 March 2007	Current Assets	31 March 2008
112,000	COIF deposit fund account	182,000
63,914	Cash at bank	10,224
3,884	Debtors and prepayments	3,723
-58,056	Creditors - amounts falling due within one year	-60,585
121,742	Net Assets	135,362
	Represented by:	
68,189	General Reserve	68,348
12,342	Premises Reserve	9,287
3,000	IT Replacement Reserve	6,000
25,998	Legal Liabilities Reserve	29,001
3,596	Wessex Water Project Reserve	4,557
236	Welfare Benefits Project Reserve	
5,759	Local Network Fund Project Reserve	
2,622	Community Fund Advice & Administration Project Reserve	1,723
	Heatherland Project fund	2,988
	Dorset Rural Outreach	1,458
	Staff sickness fund	12,000
121,742	Total	135,362

Treasurer's Report

The Bureau is primarily funded by East Dorset District Council, together with Dorset District Council, the Big Lottery Fund, Wessex Water, East Dorset Housing Association and Primary Health Care Trusts. These are supplemented by local Town and Parish Councils, Community Service Clubs such as Rotary and the Wimborne and Ferndown Lions Club, donations from the public and funds raised by the Friends of East Dorset CAB. We thank them all for their support.

Total incoming resources for the year were £182,434 and the resulting surplus was £13,620. East Dorset District Council increased their core funding from £63,432 to £64,000. In addition a further £1,354 of the specific grant of £25,000 from the Council's Implementing Electronic Government Grant was received and spent on information technology. A new three year funding grant from the Big Lottery Fund was awarded in February 2008 to cover the costs of a Rural Outreach Advice Service. The Friends of East Dorset CAB raised a magnificent £12,099 for the Bureau. This huge increase over last year was mainly due to the Rotary Swimathon which raised £4,441.

The year ended 31 March 2008 was the second year of the 3-year development grant of £85,048 for the Big Lottery. This is funding 75% of the costs of three essential part-time posts for Money Advice, Supervision and Administration. A new source of funding to take over when the Big Lottery Grant ends in March 2009 has not yet been found. The increase in this year's surplus is in line with the Board's decision to increase reserves to help cover this shortfall in the event that new funding cannot be found.

The Bureau is reliant on the continuing sources of external funding and much time and effort is put into actively seeking new sources so that we can continue the same level of services which are vital to the people of East Dorset.

Princecroft Willis are our auditors and we are grateful to them for their continuing support and advice.

Helen Sturdy FMAAT, MCIE, DChA

Office Manager

Another busy year on the admin front but happily with very little change in personnel. We said goodbye to Lynda Lake, who had typed our Money Adviser's letters on a Wednesday afternoon – sometimes as many as 40 in one afternoon! Pam Chapman has also left after many years of advice and reception work in Ferndown and we thank them both for their help.

The main change which, if it has been truly successful, will not have been noticed by anyone, is that we can now we can now 'see' the file server in Ferndown from our Wimborne admin office. Every 15 minutes we automatically copy revised template files to Ferndown and we update complete off-site back-ups of the two office server systems. This may not be exciting to many people, but I can assure you that it makes a big difference to me and that it is progress! You will not be surprised that it is Alan Hart whom we have to thank for masterminding this.

Also this year, on the advice of our Treasurer, we updated our accounting package from a home grown spreadsheet system to using QuickBooks. It has not been without various hitches, but I feel certain that in a few more months we will feel quite comfortable with it. It is hoped that it will make the audit trouble-free – fingers crossed.

Finally a big thank-you to the band of admin helpers who beaver away both in the background and as receptionists.

Lucy Campbell



Friends of EDCAB

This financial year we have achieved well over and above our target of £5,000 but we must not be complacent as the final figures also show the monies raised when the Friends were chosen as one of the Rotary Club of Wimborne's Swimathon 2006 Charities. Thank you Rotary Club.



During this past year a variety of fundraising events took place. A Fashion Show, a Barbeque, Polar Film Show and our annual Jazz Evening to name but a few and all took place in various venues around East Dorset.

The Friends strive to continue to raise much needed funds to help the Bureau continue their good work and, without the help of our stalwart volunteers manning each event, this would not be possible. A great number of these people also give their time freely to work during the day in the Bureau and then kindly give up their spare time because they believe in the good work that the Bureau does.

The Friends are always in need of volunteers to help out at their fundraising events and we would welcome anyone even if they would like just to bake a cake for one of the Sundays when we serve teas at Mary Angus' Garden Opening. If you would like to become a Friend, all the better.

Thank you once again everyone who has helped, whether in a small or large way, over the past year. Without all these cogs, the wheel would not turn.

**Cllr Mrs Diann March
Chairman Friends of East
Dorset CAB**

Chairman.....	Diann March
Vice Chairman	John Rynne
Treasurer	Joan Taylor
Minutes Secretary	David Morgan
Membership Secretary	Joan Taylor
CAB Manager	Hilary Forrest
Press Secretary	Tess Moberly
Bookstall	Pat Anderson
Committee Member	Dana Procter
Committee Member	Christine Pacey
Ex-Committee	
Newsletter	Bob Moberly
Barclays Liaison	Derek Gorman



In February last year the bureau was asked by the Chronic Granulomatous Disorder (CGD) Research Trust to provide national advice to those affected by this disorder and their families.



CGD is a rare genetic disorder that affects the bone marrow making it difficult for sufferers to fight infection. It is mainly, but not exclusively, found in males and can cause life threatening illnesses although advances in medical treatment are improving the prognosis for these patients.

As expected, the disorder is rare and the number of enquiries has been small, just nine in total, which have been concerned with benefit and employment issues.

It has been a pleasure to talk to these very positive clients who seem to want to make the most of their lives despite the difficulties caused by their disease.

Sue Taylor

The Citizens Advice Service

Aims of the Service

The eagle-eyed amongst you will have spotted that the Aims and Principles of Citizens Advice have changed. The new statements are shorter, snappier statements which still convey the same ideas. Pat Temple attended the AGM and Conference at York at which this change was voted in.

This is not only way in which we have contributed to the National Agenda. Gillian Dawson continues to be a Trustee and chaired the Annual Social Policy Conference in London. Fiona Wilkinson and Roz Watts are CitA Tutors. Roz attended a high-level review of the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures with the Department of Business and Regulatory Reform and ACAS, putting the case for reduced bureaucracy, and pointing out how difficult it is for clients to actually obtain the awards when employers refuse to pay. David Cummins, our Employment specialist was interviewed for a national survey on clients' experience of the system. And of course we make annual returns and respond to consultation exercises when asked.

The new aims and principles as voted on and accepted at the AGM are on the front cover.

Money Advice

During the last year the Bureau has been kept busy as usual with debt clients. The Bureau currently offers four days of specialist debt appointments with Maggie Pope and myself. In addition two new debt appointments on other days are taken by generalist advisers, some of whom carry their own debt caseloads. We are grateful to Rachel, Beryl and Audrey who assist with our administration. We also thank Wessex Water and The Big Lottery who contribute towards our costs.

Thanks to the constant advertising of IVAs in the media and press we get plenty of work undoing the mess and hardship they have caused as there are many situations when they are not suitable. We do not expect the situation to get any easier in the coming year. Apart from negotiating with creditors we are also involved with benefit checks, making sure that clients are getting all that they are entitled to. We deal with housing issues such as possession hearings for social or private tenants and clients with mortgages. We prepare submissions and budgets and advise on court procedure. This enables a client to feel more confident when they attend court and showing that they have been proactive in taking advice normally gives an outcome to the client's advantage.

We also offer financial health checks (Money Box scheme) to residents East Dorset Housing Association. The check includes benefit and income maximisation and assistance with options for the future.

One of the changes in the past year has been the number of charging orders that we have seen. Previously they were rare but now are becoming more common as the only way seen for a creditor to secure his/her debt. As there is no equivalent sanction for tenants this puts homeowners in debt at a distinct disadvantage.



Nora Hall

Welfare Benefits Home Visiting Service/ Rural Outreach Service

A real roller-coaster of a ride on the funding front this year!

After many months of negotiating with the Big Lottery on the part of Hilary and Managers of other Dorset bureaux, another 3 years' worth of money was secured – the home-visiting service is now safe until February 2011.

This is a much needed and much used service. Referrals continue to come from Social Care & Health, from within the bureau and quite a high number from clients themselves by way of repeat requests. Sometimes a change of circumstances prompts further contact, sometimes a Disability Allowance/ Attendance Allowance renewal claim, sometimes an entirely different problem or query.

The new funding allows for any topic to be covered, although in the East Dorset area only. I have already had to refer on clients from outside East Dorset – it does cause a little dismay, because continuity with one adviser is always preferred. However, I am sure that, given 2 or 3 months, the system will work well for all concerned. A variety of issues will be interesting, although I feel sure that benefits will still form the vast majority of the work.

I look forward to the coming year as Rural Outreach Adviser within East Dorset.



Success story!

Sue Lynch, our Home Visitor, achieved a particular success.

The client, now aged 65 had his claim for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) suspended after spending over 6 months outside the UK. CAB put in a new claim for Attendance Allowance but also pursued an Appeal for DLA re-instatement. The client had kept the DWP fully informed of his movements but was not told that he risked losing his DLA if he spent over 6 months in Spain. Sue succeeded in securing £5,700 of backdated DLA for him.

Sue Lynch

Advice Session Supervisor

Quality control at the CAB

- Prioritise and juggle the demands of clients in the waiting room
- Ensure all clients, whether on the 'phone, by e-mail or personal callers (face-to-face) get an appropriate, tailored service for their needs
- Ensure all follow up work is done and targets and deadlines are met
- Find out and work with the capabilities and competences of each adviser on duty
- Encourage advisers to develop their skills and knowledge further
- Check and monitor the quality and extent of all work done with and for clients each day
- Give on-going feedback to advisers on the quality of their work
- Keep the manager up to date with advice issues

What a job description!

The tasks above listed may seem very daunting and even unmanageable at times, but, with the full support of our managers (Hilary and Pat), experts (Gillian, Sue, Sue, David, John, Nora and Maggie), support staff (Lucy, Jan and the team) and with the dedication and enthusiasm of our incredible volunteer advisers, being an Advice Session Supervisor (or "Session Minder") at East Dorset CAB is a wonderfully rewarding and challenging job. Hilary organises regular team meetings for all the supervisors so that we can all contribute in discussions about service developments and how to support our advisers and clients in the best way possible. Thank you to all who continue to make this the best job around.



Fiona Wilkinson

Employment Specialist Report

Our focus this year was on negotiation – directly and through ACAS, rather than appearing at a Tribunal to obtain an award. This saves enormous amounts of time and nervous energy preparing for a Tribunal.



There are two distinct aspects of advice-giving in employment matters. One is the usual legal issue-based advice. The other is the less obvious, but vital, skill of negotiating and mediating. We are also proud of the way some of our clients learn, with our help, to deal with the issues, skills and system: one of them negotiated through ACAS, and arrived at a settlement for Unfair Dismissal and Disability Discrimination of over £4000. Others have resolved issues and kept their jobs.

Ten of our clients received a total of £25,858 between them, including one whom we represented at Tribunal.

Issues vary widely. We have advised on unpaid wages, unfair dismissal, unpaid notice pay or holiday pay, lack of procedures, various aspects of discrimination and harassment – due to disability, sex, age, race, religion - changes to terms and conditions, redundancy, sickness and sick leave, how to use the statutory procedures and more. We are grateful to Legal Executive Nick Hanning for his discrimination advice.

There is a trend for some employers not to pay Employment Tribunal awards. Three clients have had court battles for over a year to obtain them – and our adviser David Cummins has stayed on to see them through. Citizens Advice nationally is pressing the government to address the issue in new procedures expected next year. Our own Advice Session Supervisor Roz Watts was included in talks at DBERR (formerly DTI) to share her experience on this.

Gillian Dawson

Tax Credit Overpayments

It has been well documented in the media that overpayments have affected a large number of claimants causing them great anxiety and financial hardship and this has been the case in the bureau. Claimants have to be on low incomes to qualify for this benefit and at the end of the tax year to be told that they have been overpaid can be devastating for clients. The sums owed have been anything from a few hundred to several thousand pounds, the largest we have seen is £25,000.

We have been doing our best to challenge these overpayments, but it is a long-winded and complicated process that only adds to clients' stress and anxiety. This is caused by the large number of people making complaints putting a huge strain on the system and what appears to be poor design of Revenue and Customs computer systems.

There have been some successes and we will keep plodding away at trying to help these clients.

Sue Taylor

Heatherlands Outreach

It seems hard to believe that the Heatherlands outreach has now been open for over a year. A change in funding means the opening hours have changed slightly; we open for longer on a Tuesday morning, but by appointment only in the afternoon at Turbary Church for the Bus Stop Club. The clients are still mainly young mothers, but now we are getting fathers and grandparents too. This has expanded the range of advice given and we now do more debt and employment whereas before it seemed it was primarily housing.

The travelling community, who were a lively section of the clients especially in the afternoon, have travelled on. Life is quieter without them as they were always interesting and the cultural differences made advising challenging. For example, some do not consider the ability to read and write totally necessary which makes filling out forms a bit of a "hit and miss" affair. For some it was the first time they had access to a bureau without an appointment and hopefully they will be back.

The centre itself has changed a bit too. Different funding and staffing has allowed improvements to the building itself. A new kitchen and a coat of paint is just a start. The CAB room now has pictures from Ferndown Upper School Art Class on the walls and a project to allow apprentice plasterers in to practice seems to be likely.



Funding until 2009 has been approved so hopefully we can "hang in" for sometime yet reaching clients who otherwise would not get the advice they need.

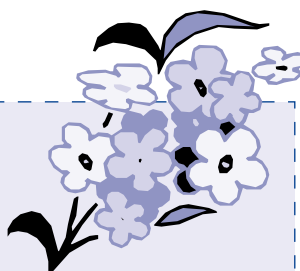
Christine Orange

Feedback

"Excellent service - invaluable help for the public"

"Superb help...greatly appreciated"

"All the staff have been more than helpful. Thanks very much"



Ferndown

Demand for our service in Ferndown has continued to be steady throughout the year.

There were periods when we were booking appointments two or three weeks in advance but usually we are able to see people within a week from when they contact us. Where it is appropriate we are able to give telephone advice much sooner.

Money issues continue to dominate the enquiries that are made but we also see a substantial number of clients about employment, housing, relationship and consumer problems. If we are not able to find the answer to any problem we try to find another source of help. The internet is a useful resource here and we are increasingly able to direct clients to websites which may help them. Citizens Advice's own website, www.adviceguide.org.uk, is accessible by the public and provides useful initial information on a range of subjects which we can then enlarge on if necessary.

We are fortunate that we have retained all our advisers here in Ferndown this year and their numbers have been swelled by some newly trained volunteers who have brought their own skills and expertise.

The addition of air conditioning to the general office in Ferndown has been greatly welcomed by staff and volunteers. It was much needed and should mean that we will not have to close in hot weather as we have sometimes had to in the past.

Passers-by will also notice that we have a new sign outside the office which makes us easier to find by new clients.

We are aware that we are still difficult to access by some members of the community and are always looking for ways to rectify this.



Pat Temple



Sixpenny Handley

The year at Handley surgery started well with a steady flow of clients. However, for as long as the outreach has been operating, numbers have fluctuated. From late Summer '07 they fell away. New doctors had arrived and, although briefing them about how CAB advisers help patients and being sure everyone understood what was on offer, referrals dropped substantially.

Like many surgeries, Handley offers a wide range of services and needs all the rooms it can get. This meant the area I used was often required, and the pressures on space were continual. The surgery does not have spare land on which to extend nor the finances currently to rebuild.

Handley surgery appreciated the CAB service to patients. But when I decided to resign in January to concentrate on the new joint training programme between East Dorset and Christchurch, the practice decided to terminate the contract rather than continue with a new adviser.

I was sorry about this decision; it had been my hope to keep the service going. I know how useful it has been over the (nearly) four years I was there and for many years before I took over. However should patients need the CAB, health visitors and district nurses know where to direct them. Also the Rural Outreach Adviser undertakes home visits across all the East Dorset area.



Gilly Crompton

Verwood/Cranborne Surgeries

The never-ending demand for appointments within both surgeries continues!

The nature of the problems has tended to become more in-depth, as is the case with CAB advice work in general.

More follow-up work is required and I have to try to limit appointments periodically to allow for catch up. To see 4 (or maybe 5) clients in the morning and do all the necessary follow-up work in 6 hours can be difficult. I also find that, more and more, clients contact me by phone for further advice which of course adds to the work load.

Still a huge amount of benefit advice – especially disability benefits, which is to be expected.

All the doctors continue to be extremely co-operative, supplying any supporting evidence willingly and promptly.

Some debt advice is now being sought as well, which has not tended to be the case before.

Also there are some relationship issues, with the ensuing problems; also housing queries crop up fairly regularly.

After quite a number of years in this role I still find the work interesting, varied and rewarding. It continues to have the element of the unknown because, in most cases, as the client sits down in front of me, I have no idea what advice they are seeking – it certainly keeps me on my toes!

Sue Lynch

Social Policy

Our social policy work is where our clients' experiences demonstrate an issue in society as a whole which needs addressing.

Some examples this year include:

Employment

- One such example (see the employment report) is the issue of unpaid Employment Tribunal awards.
- Our advisers reported cases where vulnerable migrant workers were paid less than the wage promised or not given the hours as advertised.

Housing

- East Dorset CAB participated in the Dorset CABx work on the difficulty for people on benefits obtaining privately rented accommodation, by examining the issues from the landlords' and the tenants' perspectives. I attended the Landlords Forums at EDDC and Bournemouth.
- Local MP Annette Brooke took up our concerns with two government ministers about the payment periods for Housing Benefit not fitting with landlords' requirements.
- Hilary Forrest represents the bureau on the Housing District Operation Group.

Jobcentre Plus

We responded to the Jobcentre Plus consultation with our clients' concerns over closures of offices. We were pleased to share these concerns in October with local MP Robert Walter.

Post Office Closures

Citizens Advice Bureaux are included in consultations nationwide regarding Post Office closures, using our local knowledge. We responded with the concerns raised by our clients as a result of our Post Offices work done last year.

I would like to thank Ian Lee for his painstaking campaigning work this year, and Rowena Wilkes for her contributions when she joined our team temporarily. In particular, I thank the advisers who write the reports highlighting social policy issues as they occur.

Gillian Dawson

Training Officer

I have now been Bureau Training Officer for two years, and my third intake of trainees is currently working through the 'Supervised Interview' stage. They will all soon be on the Rota. There are three volunteers in the intake, all of whom started before Christmas and completed their 'Certificate Course' in late March. They are a hardworking and enthusiastic group and it has been a pleasure to guide them.

The previous trainees, also a group of three, who started in the summer of '07, included a Bournemouth University Law student. They too were delightful and are all still with us, busy doing Rota days. A number of more experienced trainee advisers are currently working towards their Final Assessments. I expect them to receive CAB Certificates in General Advice work soon.

Since the number of external courses has been substantially reduced, advisers continue to expand their skills and update their knowledge in other ways. This year we have introduced a monthly 'Bite Size' session for advisers to read from Cablink (the CAB Information Website). These 'Bite Size' sessions last between half and three-quarters of an hour and cover an extensive range of topics. They are a useful learning aid.

We have also run two in-house 'Benefit Refresher' courses with Fiona Wilkinson as the tutor, and two 'Employment Courses' run by Roz Watts. These have been extremely popular with ED Advisers and have been offered to other bureaux. We've had some very useful and very positive feedback.

Lastly (and this is a joint bureaux venture) I will assume the role of Trainer for Christchurch trainees starting this April. I shall attend the Christchurch bureau every week until mid-Summer to train their volunteers. That way I can familiarise myself with the bureau and how it works, as I get to know them. Then, in October, the plan is to train both Christchurch and East Dorset trainees in our Wimborne office. We'll try this out for a year and if it works, and everyone is happy, continue into 2009. It's an exciting project and I am very pleased to be involved.

Finally I'd like to pass on a sincere 'thank you' to everyone who works in the bureau and helps out in so many ways with our learners. I am proud to be part of this committed group who I know provide the best the CAB can offer.

Gilly Crompton

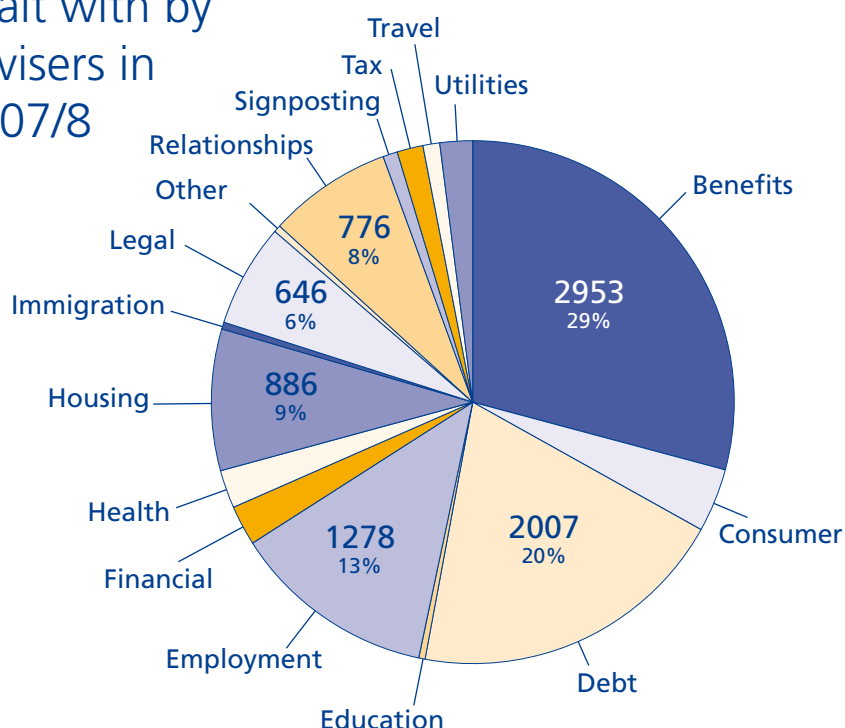
Bureau activities 2007/8

Initial Info/advice Bureau	1,764
Further - Bureau	1,319
Initial Info/advice Outreach	128
Further - Outreach	113
Initial Info/advice - Phone	1,877
Further From Client - Phone	752
Initial Letter,fax,text	17
Further Letter,fax,text From Client	237
Initial Visit To Client	124
Further Visit To Client	100
Initial - Email	59
Further From Client - Email	53
Initial Advice/info - Other	7
Further From Client - Other	25
Follow-up To Client-letter,phone,etc.	2,499
Referral To External Agency	50
Referral To Cab Specialist	124
Correspondence With Client - No Advice	99
Third Party - Correspondence	1,376
Third Party - Telephone	1,876
Third Party - Other	90
Representation - Client Present	8
Representation - Client Absent	1
Tribunals	144
Other Work On Behalf Of Client	128

Clients starting a new enquiry in the period 2007/8 (Total unique clients)

	Total New Clients	% New	Total Repeat Clients	% Repeat	Total Unique Clients
Ferndown	863	81.0	202	19.0	1,065
Wimborne	1,624	80.4	396	19.6	2,020
Total	2,487		598		3,085

Total new issues dealt with by advisers in 2007/8



New enquiries by Work level 2007/8

	Annual Total	%
Information	977	24.5
Advice	2,336	58.5
Advice and referral	75	1.9
Advice and limited action	215	5.4
Generalist Casework	115	2.9
Specialist Casework	275	6.9

Age profile

Age profile group	Female	Male	Unknown/ Not Recorded	Total
0 - 16	0	2	0	2
17 - 24	32	15	0	47
25 - 34	43	23	0	66
35 - 49	79	42	0	121
50 - 64	92	55	0	147
65 - 74	34	32	0	66
75 - 84	27	21	0	48
85 +	12	5	0	17
Not recorded	364	207	7	578
Total	683	402	7	1092

CONTACT US...

WIMBORNE

Hanham Road, BH21 1AS

MONDAY 10am - 3pm
 TUESDAY 10am - 3pm
 WEDNESDAY (Debt)
 THURSDAY 10am - 3pm
 FRIDAY 10am - 1pm

Telephone

(01202) 884738

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 10am and 3.45 pm

FERNDOWN

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www.adviceguide.org.uk
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MANAGEMENT & PAID STAFF

Bureau Manager Hilary Forrest (F/T)
 Advice Services Manager..... Pat Temple (P/T)
 Advice Session Supervisors Roz Watts (P/T)
 Fiona Wilkinson (P/T)
 Assistant Manager – Social Policy & Employment Gillian Dawson (Vol)
 Money Adviser..... Nora Hall (P/T)
 GP Adviser and Training Officer..... Gilly Crompton (P/T)
 GP/ Welfare Benefits/Rural Outreach Sue Lynch (P/T)
 Heatherlands Outreach Adviser Christine Orange (P/T)
 Office Manager..... Lucy Campbell (P/T)

VOLUNTEERS

Advisers

Pat Anderson	(SM)	John Laidlaw	
Rob Barsby	(TA)	Helen Leavens	(M)
Ruth Bush	(TA)	John Moore	(M)
Tom Clarke	(TA)	Judy Moore	
Kryisia Cowan	(TA)	Robbie Morgan	(M)
Dorothy Dodman		John Newman	
Jean Durant	(M)	Katy Norman	(M)
Kathryn Finn	(TA)	Christine Orange	
Christine Fisher	(SM)	John Parsonage	(TA)
Anita Ford	(M)	Maggie Pope (Debt Specialist)	
John Gibbons		Roger Purkiss	(TA)
Jane Green	(SM)	Margaret Stevens	(M)
Eddie Hawkins	(SM)	Joan Taylor	(SM)
Chris Isaac	(M)	Sue Taylor (Tax Credits)	
Tina Jackson	(TA)	David Thompson	(M)
Jenny James	(SM)	Rose Turner	(TA)
Anna King		Ann Walker	(M)
Brian Kinge	(M)		

Key: (M) = Minder (SM) = Session Minder (TA) = Trainee Adviser

Employment Consultant

David Cummins

In Training

Sarah Haywood
 Juliet Lewis
 Shelley Tilley
 Julie Tooms

Social Policy Project Worker

Ian Lee
 Rowena Wilkes (part year)

Advice Assistants

Derek Geldart
 Rachel Green
 Beryl Sinclair
 Sue Taylor

IT Consultant

Alan Hart

Administration/ Reception

Ferndown
 Mary Angus
 Pam Chapman (to Jan 08)
 Beryl Sinclair

Wimborne

Audrey Beall
 Jan Burford
 Paul Cripwell
 Linda Gurman
 Erica Hawkins
 Lynda Lake (part year)
 Claire Parker
 Pam Parker
 Denise Penny
 Judith Ranger
 Jean Richards
 Avril Rutland