

## Campaigning Improving lives

At Mid Suffolk CAB, we don't just provide advice: we campaign for changes collectively with other bureaux that benefit millions of people each year. This is called our social policy work.

Citizens Advice is in a unique position as we have first hand knowledge about issues from our clients' experiences. Every person that turns to a CAB for help shows us how services, law and practice need to improve. We use this expertise to inform policymakers and service providers about the direct impact their decisions have on individuals both locally and nationally.

As the information we receive through client reports is detailed, we are able to build up a comprehensive picture of the issues affecting individuals and communities today. No other service offers comparable geographic coverage our invaluable evidence of nationwide issues provides a vital tool for resources to be targeted effectively.

This unique and important insight also empowers us to respond with authority to government consultations; to expose inadequate or unfair laws, policies and practices and recommend improvements.

Mid Suffolk CAB is currently contributing social policy evidence on a number of Suffolk issues including bailiffs and educational costs. Social policy representatives from Suffolk bureaux meet regularly to discuss local problems and endeavour to solve or highlight them to the organisations concerned.

See [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

## The Winning Team

The outstanding work of the bureau has been achieved by a team of dedicated volunteers and staff who have once again embraced change and met the challenge of providing a free advice service for the community of Mid Suffolk.

This has been possible in part by the support and financial assistance provided by local individuals and charitable organisations. I would like to thank Cllr. Julia Truelove, The Stowmarket Relief Trust, Stowmarket Town Council, Needham Market Town Council, The Geoffrey Burton Trust, The Alfred Williams Trust and local Parish Councils.

## Join our winning team

Contact us:  
5 Milton Road South  
Stowmarket  
IP14 1EZ

Telephone: 01449 676060 / 676280  
Advice on line: [www.midsuffolkcab.org.uk](http://www.midsuffolkcab.org.uk)

Monday	9.30 - 3.30
Tuesday	9.30 - 3.30
Wednesday	9.30 - 3.30 (Telephone only)
Thursday	9.30 - 6.30
Friday	9.30 - 12.30

Advice in all areas including benefits, consumer, debt, education, employment, finance, health, immigration, legal, relationship, tax, travel and utilities.

Company Reg No. 5296023 Charity Reg. 1107152

# Mid-Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau Annual Review 2008

Quality Advice  
Locally

citizens  
advice  
bureau

## Chairman's Report

Throughout 2007 the bureau was very busy. Many people have problems nowadays, often of a complex and serious nature. This is not something to celebrate; however we are glad that so many do choose to come to the bureau and it remains vital that we are able to offer a service that is free and open to all.

Some sixty-five people are involved in the day to day operation of the bureau, but only one in seven is a paid employee. All the others comprise a highly trained and devoted body of volunteers, who together possess a rich fund of experience that helps greatly in their dealings with clients.

We are an independent charitable company but part of the national CITIA network as well as being an advisory body recognized by the Legal Services Commission. We received generous grant aid from the County and District Councils under a service level agreement and Stowmarket Town Council and a high proportion of other Parish Councils in the area are also generous towards our work. County Councilors have been very good in using their discretionary locality allowances to assist with particular projects in the bureau. We are grateful too for donations from local charitable trusts and private individuals.

Through advice to clients we often enable the authorities to make savings by ensuring that claims for housing and other benefits are made correctly according to proper entitlement. Many clients have also gained financially after advice in the bureau as a result of establishing just settlement of employment matters, benefit payments and consumer protection issues.

I would offer hearty thanks to my fellow Trustees, the Bureau Manager and every member of the paid staff body and volunteers for their dedication and effort throughout the year.

Roger Rehahn.

## Aims and Objectives

"Citizens Advice provides an essential and high quality service, open to all but is especially valuable to some of the most vulnerable people in society. The service helps people make their rights a reality and facilitates improved policy-making."

Karen Buck MP

## Our Vision and Values

Our vision is to make a positive and lasting difference to the lives of people living and working in Mid Suffolk.

We want to offer an efficient and accessible advice and information service relating to people's legal rights and responsibilities.

We want to offer our services using a holistic approach and acting with our clients in a supportive, empowering, responsible and professional way.

We want to create a working environment that feels equally friendly, welcoming and respectful to everyone using it.

We operate within an equality framework as agreed by Citizens Advice nationally. This means that we respect equality and diversity and we work within a number of policies and procedures designed to support them, both in our service delivery and in our recruitment, selection and treatment of volunteers.

## Volunteering

Mid Suffolk CAB currently has over 55 volunteers and 10 part time paid members of staff. Most volunteering roles within the bureau require a commitment of a full or half day per week.

For many people, the best thing about volunteering for the CAB is getting to meet a wide range of people and make new friends. There is a real team spirit at Mid Suffolk CAB, and we provide a supportive environment to make sure that you get the most out of your time with us.

People volunteer for the Citizens Advice service in a variety of roles. As well as advising clients, volunteers can also work as fundraisers, administrators, campaigners and Trustees.

All these roles are vital in keeping the free service going, and each role also helps people develop new skills for life beyond the bureau. Of the volunteer advisers that left the national service in 2006/07, 32 per cent left for paid employment and 7 per cent left for further education or training.

For younger people, volunteering provides work experience, training and a path into work or education. Our older, or retired, volunteers say it keeps them in touch with the community, active and means they can "put something back".

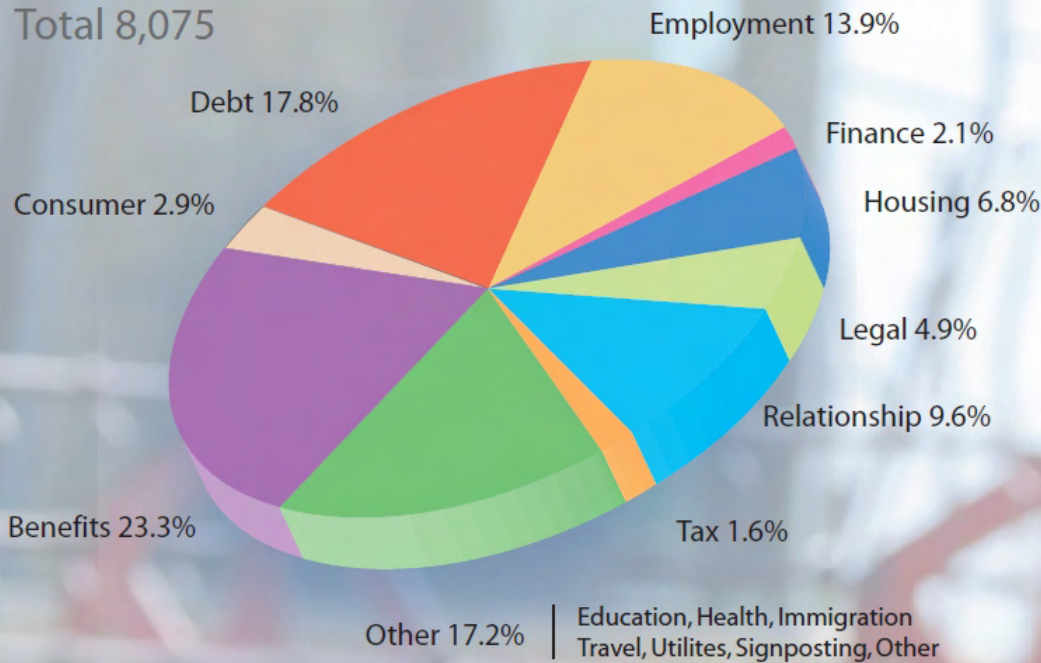
CAB volunteers get free training, ongoing support and expenses paid. Citizens Advice runs over 2,000 training events each year and the training results in an accredited qualification.

See [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

# 2007/2008

## Core Issues

Total 8,075



## Looking ahead to 2008/9

Increase opening hours of bureau

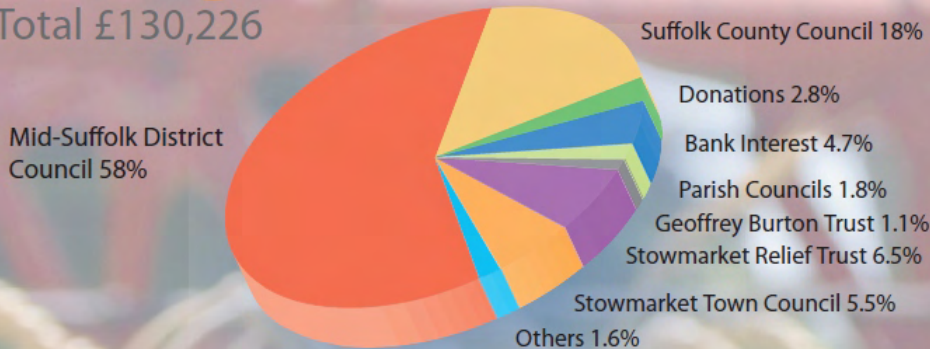
A Mid Suffolk CAB website providing online advice

Successful application for Investors in Volunteers

Secure funding for part-time benefits and income maximisation worker

## Funding

Total £130,226



## Money gained for clients:

£282,229.00

by volunteer generalist advisors

£54,078.00

by two employment caseworkers

£34,000.00

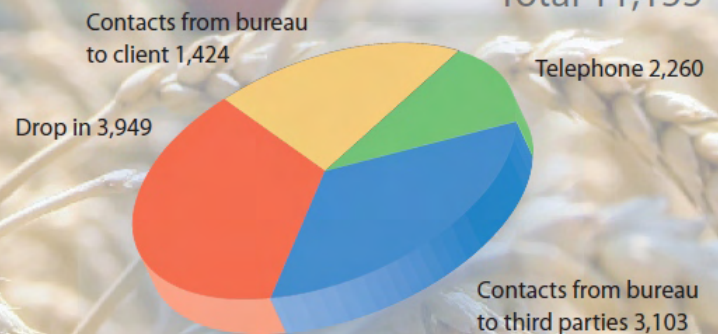
by benefit caseworker

two part-time debt caseworkers

have provided debt advice totalling

## Contacts

Total 11,155



£2.7million