

## Background notes on the Citizens Advice service

The Citizens Advice service works to fulfil two aims:

- to ensure that individuals do not suffer through lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their needs effectively

and equally:

- to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally.

The advice given by bureaux is free, independent, impartial and confidential. The service is non-judgmental, offering assistance as appropriate to all clients. It aims to be equally accessible to everyone who seeks or needs its help, regardless of age, class, race, religion, gender, disability or sexuality. All advice workers, whether paid or volunteer, are professionally trained to provide an accurate, quality service and to be supportive to clients.

The Citizens Advice service works to:

**inform** people about the law and how it affects them; about their rights and responsibilities; and about how they may be able to satisfy their needs

**advise** people on the options available to them and on the potential consequences of different courses of action

**support** people as they consider and decide what to do, listening to their concerns and helping them move forward

**assist** people in pursuing their chosen course of action by negotiation, representation and referral to other sources of help needed

**influence** those responsible for policies and services by bringing to their notice the problems people experience and recommending changes

Citizens Advice Bureaux deal with around 5.3 million new problems a year, giving detailed information, advice and support to people on every subject. The majority of problems concern benefits, debt and other consumer issues, employment, housing and the law.

Citizens Advice advice is delivered from over 3,500 locations across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. 21,000 volunteers work in the bureaux, together with over 6,000 paid staff including bureau managers and specialist advisers. Together they provide the largest advice service in the world.

Each bureau is a separate charity managed by its own trustee board, and must meet membership quality standards in order to affiliate to Citizens Advice. The national association, Citizens Advice, provides a range of services to support bureaux in their work: these include the Information System, training, field support, quality audits, social policy, press and publicity, parliamentary liaison and information technology.

We are responsible for our own funding, and actively seek donations and grants to help support us in the work that we do help local people.

## **CITIZENS ADVICE EPSOM AND EWELL - PROFILE**

Location:	The Old Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5AG
Service Delivery:	We deliver our service through as many different channels as we can, to make sure we are accessible to everyone – this includes phone, video conferencing and email – especially since suspending our face to face operations at our main location in the Town Hall, Epsom due to Covid-19. The role can be undertaken flexibly as we are operating a hybrid system of remote working and in-office, for the foreseeable future.
Specialist services:	Mid and East Surrey Mental Health Outreach service for clients with mental health issues across Mid and East Surrey. Specialist Debt for local people with critical debt issues Legal Aid Housing solicitor Pensionwise delivery site Tribunals & Appeals
Specialist access:	Textphone for deaf clients, Wheelchair access, Disabled toilet
Number of new enquiries:	Approximately 3,000 per annum
Number of client contacts:	Approximately 11,000 per annum
Main types of enquiries:	Benefits, debt, housing and employment
Number of volunteers:	50 advisers and assessors (incl trainees) 14 support staff 8 members of the Trustee Board
Area served:	Borough of Epsom and Ewell
Population:	75,100 (taken from the 2011 census)

While Epsom & Ewell as a whole is relatively well-off, this masks 2 wards with the highest deprivation indices. Epsom & Ewell has the highest percentage of ethnic minority groups among all the districts in Surrey.