

Voices of Wales on...

Building resilience

Making people and communities more resilient

Building resilience in individuals and communities is a key part of our service as Citizens Advice - we help people find a way forward, so that they feel more confident about making good decisions. After advice **2 in 3** felt more confident to handle a similar problem in future and **3 in 4** felt more knowledgeable regarding their rights. We respond to people's needs and increase their ability to solve their own problems.

Last year, through our Welsh Government funded projects - Frontline Advice, Community Focused and Better Advice Better Lives (BABL) - we succeeded in securing the following outcomes for clients (see bubbles):



Leah's story

Leah was referred into the project by her support worker.

Leah had numerous health issues which were exacerbated by a low income. This included a shortfall in her rent as she was finding it difficult to keep up with her payments. She also had rent arrears from a previous property. Leah said "When I first met Lisa (an adviser from Citizens Advice RCT) I was in an extremely dark place with mounting debt, no sure roof over my head, no way out".

Although Leah was already in receipt of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), due to Citizen Advice RCT's intervention she is now in receipt of the enhanced rate; they also successfully applied for Discretionary Housing Payment to cover the shortfall in Leah's rent and a number of her non priority debts have been written off. These financial outcomes have helped Leah better manage her situation and remain in her home, even managing to pay off some of her arrears.

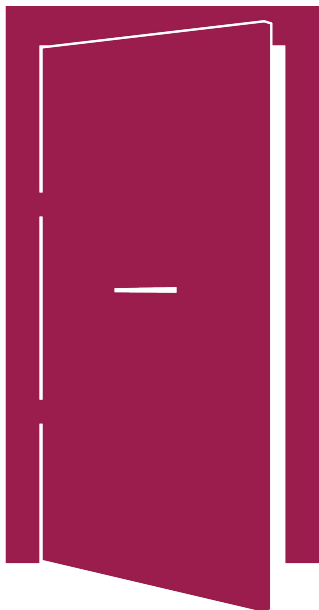
Leah said "As a result of the help provided I have been able to maintain my integrity and dignity within my own home. I can pay my rent, keep a roof over my head, food in my belly and am not having sleepless nights worrying about people knocking on my door."

Advice at the right time is key to building resilient individuals and communities

Case study: Preventing homelessness in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT)

This Citizens Advice RCT project aims to prevent homelessness by offering early advice on debt and welfare benefit issues to clients who are being supported by Rhondda Cynon Taff Local Authority Housing Solutions team and Supporting People advisers.

The aim of the project is to stabilise and improve the financial situation of vulnerable clients to help them stay in their homes, or assist with the uptake of new accommodation to prevent homelessness (see Leah's story).



Case Study: Promoting wellbeing, increasing resilience and reducing risk in Ceredigion

The Ceredigion 3rd Sector Community Resource Team is a working partnership between 3 voluntary organisations, namely the British Red Cross, Citizens Advice Ceredigion (CAC) and Age Cymru Ceredigion (ACC).

It is funded by the Welsh Government's Intermediate Care Fund to deliver a specific set of interventions that promote wellbeing, increase resilience and reduce risk, thereby avoiding:

- unnecessary admissions to hospital, or residential care
- delays when an individual was scheduled to be discharged from care

Citizens Advice Ceredigion and Age Cymru Ceredigion provide long term interventions through their information, advice, support and advocacy roles.

The interventions cover 4 main areas:



Housing



Income maximisation



Social care



Warm homes

This ensures that individuals are empowered with knowledge of, and access to, their rights and entitlements. This enables them to become more resilient.

cyngor ar
bopeth

citizens
advice

Our Campaigns

Creating more resilient individuals and communities has been central to many of our policy asks. Some of our key policy recommendations:

- We have called on Welsh Government - and other funders - to continue to support the provision of advice services across Wales. Advice services help people to reduce their debt, stay in employment and access their welfare rights. Advice provision reduces demand on statutory and public services.
- Well-timed interventions can help improve health, well-being and resilience. We've called for advice to be available in health settings so that people with mental health conditions can get the support they need where they most need it.
- One of the wellbeing goals set out in The Wellbeing of Future Generation Act is 'A resilient Wales'. The health, well-being and resilience of people in Wales is reliant on fair and secure housing. We continue to call for everyone in Wales to have access to this.

Building resilience through training and employment

As well as building resilience by helping everyone, whoever they are, and whatever their problem, we also make communities more resilient by providing employment, training and development to volunteers, trustees and paid staff.

Last year, 11% of the volunteers who left Citizens Advice in England and Wales left for education or training. 31% left for paid employment, while 3% left their voluntary role but stayed at the local office. This suggests that they were able to develop internally and move into paid employment.

