

Voices of Wales on... 80 Years of Advice

We give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are, and whatever their problem.



Jean's story:

Jean Sherriff was 16 years old when a public meeting was called to set up Citizens Advice in Rhyl. Since the start of the war, over 50 Citizens Advice had been set up in South Wales alone. There was clearly demand in North Wales as well.

Citizens Advice Rhyl opened its doors on 23 March 1940, in a shop on Water Street. It was business as usual for the 'White Elephant Shop' (as it was known), but anyone could drop in for a cup of tea and a chat.

Donations could be made and small items were sold at the front of the shop to generate funds. There was a room at the back of the shop where private discussions with clients could take place.

An advert was placed in the shop window which read "Citizens Advice Bureau — bring us your problems."

When the war ended, the local Citizens Advice in Rhyl closed and Jean returned to work for the local council.

23 years later in 1969, Citizens Advice Rhyl reopened its doors (this time in a church), and Jean returned to Citizens Advice.

Jean remained at Citizens Advice Rhyl for the next 41 years. In later years, Jean moved away from advice and focussed on the training and support of newly appointed advisers. She finally retired in 2010, aged 86, after dedicating an incredible 47 years to Citizens Advice.



L-R: Jean during war time, and Jean at her desk in the 2000s



1939
Advice given in 200 locations following the beginning of World War II.



1948/9 - 1954
Citizens Advice influences rationing policy post-war advising on clothes and furniture rationing until 48/49 and food rationing until 1954.



1965
Total number of enquiries reaches 1.25 million by 1965.

1941

First mobile service, a converted horsebox, travelled to areas affected by the Blitz.





1960

By 1960, consumer queries are increasing at a rapid rate and continue to do so throughout the next two decades.





Our Impact

 **8 in 10 people** who used the service felt less stressed, depressed or anxious.

 Nearly **60%** have improved physical health.

 **£27 million** saved by government and public services.

 **£4 million** saved by local government through reducing homelessness.

 Nearly **£2 is saved for every £1** invested in our service.

See those stats explained [here](#).

Volunteering: Rebecca's Story

About 3 years ago, Rebecca Crozier from Bagillt was sectioned and came out of hospital to find her house had been condemned, leaving her homeless.

She came to Citizens Advice Flintshire for help and support in reinstating her benefit claims.

"It was Citizens Advice that helped to support me in reinstating my benefit claims, Citizens Advice that helped me deal with getting somewhere to live and Citizens Advice that signposted me to where I needed to be when I couldn't make a decision for myself."

Rebecca now has her mental health support set up, a place to live and has her son at home with her once again.

She decided to use her experiences to help other people by becoming a trainee adviser with Citizens Advice Flintshire.

"Without Citizens Advice, none of this would have happened," she said. "I had no capacity to do the form filling. But the support and empathy from Citizens Advice made it a doddle. Knowing someone has your back when you've hit rock bottom is massive."



1976
From 1976 onwards enquiries about employment and benefits start to rise.



1984/85
The 84/85 miners' strike leads to a spike of enquiries on benefits, fuel, housing and consumer debts.



2001
Launch of Better Advice Better Health project. By providing general and welfare rights in primary care settings across Wales.

1984

By 1984 enquiries about social security are the most common for the first time, reflecting the increasing numbers of people who are reliant on it.



1990/95

The first half of the 1990s sees a spike in enquiries around Poll Tax arrears and an increasing number of enquiries from asylum seekers and refugees.



Future of Advice

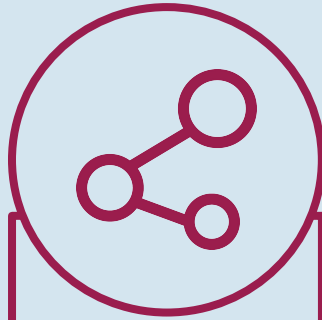
I bawb, am 80 mlynedd

For everyone, for 80 years

Our promise to the people we help. By 2022:



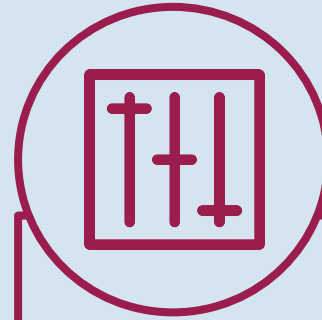
You won't **struggle** to get help from us.



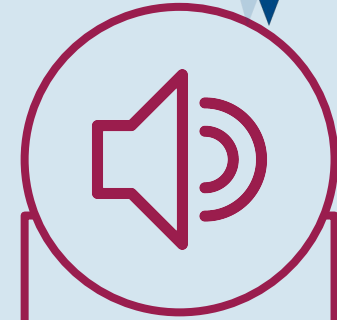
Our **service** will feel **joined up**.



We'll help you find a way forward, **whatever your problem**.



You'll get the **level of support** you need.



You know that we'll **speak up** for you.



2003

Enquiries on welfare reform were high throughout the decade, with a spike of enquiries on tax credits.



2013

Jointly with Shelter Cymru produce the Making rights real: Preventing retaliatory evictions in Wales report which led to the introduction of laws to protect tenants in Wales.



2015

Free, independent support for witnesses in criminal courts in England and Wales through the Witness Service as well as the face-to-face service for PensionWise launched.

2009

Families with Disabled Children project launched in Wales. A service to ensure families access the benefits they're entitled to.



2015

English by Default report published leading to changes in regulated companies in Wales customer service standards.



2018

'Loyalty penalty' super complaint issued to the CMA with evidence showing loyal customers pay too much for services like broadband.

