



**Bournemouth  
Christchurch  
& Poole**

# **Stronger Together**

## **Our Impact Across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole**

Insights and outcomes from a year of empowering  
communities and shaping services together

**Annual Impact & Insights Report**  
2024 - 2025





# Forward from Andrew, our Chair of Trustees

**Demand for our services remained as high as ever throughout 2024/25, and as always, we sought new ways to meet the needs of our communities, but we cannot do this alone.**

Last year was one of the most challenging in recent memory for Citizens Advice BCP. Across the charity sector, organisations faced mounting pressures: cuts to funding, rising costs, and a decline in disposable income among the communities we serve. These challenges made sustaining vital services harder than ever, while demand for advice continued to grow. The arrival of a new central government last year also brought changes and uncertainty for charities, as priorities shift and funding landscapes evolve. Navigating these changes will be critical as we continue to meet the growing needs of our communities.

In the past 18 months, we've seen the impact of growing social division and unrest, culminating in riots that affected some Citizens Advice offices, including colleagues in Sunderland. These events were a stark reminder of the importance of our work in supporting and empowering communities during times of uncertainty.

I stepped into the role of Chair in May 2025, at a time of transition for our leadership team. I looked forward to working alongside our new Chief Officer and the Board to navigate these challenges and strengthen our ability to serve the people of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

Despite the challenges we are facing, Citizens Advice BCP consistently demonstrates remarkable resilience and adaptability. We will continue to innovate and collaborate to meet the growing needs of our communities, and we will work tirelessly to strengthen partnerships and develop new approaches that ensure our services remain accessible and effective.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to my fellow trustees for their commitment and expertise, and to our dedicated staff and volunteers whose efforts make everything we do possible. I would also like to extend special thanks to Jane Burrows, who served as Chair during the year being reported. Her dedication and commitment has guided Citizens Advice BCP through some of the most challenging times we have faced as a local independent charity, and her contribution has been invaluable.

I also extend our sincere thanks to our funders and partners, including BCP Council, for their continued support of our work.

Together, we will keep adapting, working in partnership, and championing fairness for all.

**Andrew Karno – Chair of Trustees**

***“We’ll keep  
innovating and  
building strong  
partnerships to  
ensure our services  
remain accessible  
and effective for  
everyone.”***





# A message from Tom, our Chief Officer

**It's a real privilege to be writing this message as Chief Officer of Citizens Advice Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole.**

I stepped into the role earlier this year, following the remarkable leadership of Zoe Bradley, who gave us many years of dedicated service. Zoe's tenure saw us through some of our most transformative moments, including the successful merger that brought together Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole into one unified service. Zoe's vision, resilience and unwavering commitment helped shape us into the trusted and impactful organisation we are today. I want to thank Zoe personally for everything she's done, and I know many of you will join me in that appreciation.

This past year has brought continued challenges for households across BCP. Continually rising living costs, housing insecurity, and changes to welfare systems have made it harder for many people to stay afloat. In response, our team has worked with compassion and determination to ensure that people had somewhere to turn, whether for advice, advocacy or simply a listening ear.

We've supported thousands of people across BCP, helping them navigate complex systems, resolve urgent problems, and regain a sense of control. Whether it was avoiding eviction, accessing benefits, or managing debt, our advisers were there, making sure no one faced these challenges alone. The outcomes are powerful, but what matters most is the difference we make to people's lives.

Over the past 18-months, our research and campaigns work has been equally impactful. We've used our insights to highlight issues affecting our communities and drive meaningful change, raising awareness of unclaimed Pension Credit, supporting residents through the eVisa transition, and tackling challenges like rising energy costs, digital exclusion, and older people's entitlements.

We also spoke out for migrant care workers and contributed to national consultations on disability reform, ensuring our clients' voices are heard where it matters most.

At the heart of this is our commitment to partnership, collaboration and co-production. Real change happens when we work together, across Citizens Advice and beyond, with communities, partners, funders and policy makers.

Personally, I am deeply committed to social justice and building a fairer society for all. These are complex times, but we remain strong in our purpose, to empower communities, challenge inequality and stand up for those who feel unheard.

I believe in transparency and purpose-driven leadership, being open about challenges, clear on values and focused on outcomes. Leadership is never a solo effort, it's built together with trust, shared purpose and a collective commitment to making a difference.

Thank you for your continued support. Together, we're making a real and lasting impact.

**Tom Lund – Chief Officer**

***“Real change happens when we work together, across Citizens Advice and beyond.”***

# Empowering Communities Across BCP

Thousands Helped, Thousands Heard – Our Year in Action



**17,000+** People Helped



**47,500+** Issues Addressed

**9,000+** In-person  
Appointments



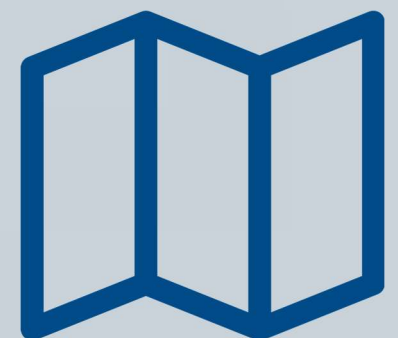
**33,000+** Emails Sent  
& Received



**11,000+** Telephone  
Calls Completed



**1,500+** People Helped  
at Partner Venues





# Who We Are & What We Do


**For over 80 years, Citizens Advice services in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole have stood alongside our communities, offering free, confidential and independent advice to help people find a way forward.**

We're proud to be part of the Citizens Advice network, which has supported people across the UK for more than 85 years, and our roots in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole run deep. We've been here through times of prosperity and times of hardship, adapting to meet the changing needs of local people.

Every year, thousands turn to us for help with issues that affect daily life, from housing and debt to benefits, immigration, employment and family matters. We listen without judgement, provide expert advice, and empower people to take control of their lives.

But we are more than an advice service. We are a trusted partner, working with local organisations, councils and residents to tackle the root causes of problems. Our data gives us unique insight into the challenges people face, and we use this evidence to influence change locally and nationally.

As we look ahead, we are committed to deepening partnerships and embracing a more co-produced approach to service design. We believe the best solutions are built with the people they serve. Together, we can shape a fairer, more resilient BCP, where everyone has the knowledge, confidence and support to thrive.



***“Together, we can shape a fairer Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole”***

In 2024/25, Citizens Advice Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole supported over 17,000 clients, completing over 53,000 activities on their behalf. These figures show the depth and intensity of support required, as challenges became more complex and layered.

We saw a marked increase in issues affecting mental health and wellbeing, highlighting growing pressures on individuals and families. Our advisers responded with compassion and expertise, and we continue to invest in volunteer training, digital innovation, and new ways of working to remain accessible and responsive.

### Our Value to Society

Each year, Citizens Advice Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole helps thousands find a way forward through free, independent advice and support, and by influencing policies that matter. Our data and research provide the evidence to measure impact and advocate for change.

## Our Impact in Numbers

91%



of clients said they wouldn't have been able to resolve their problem without our help

83%



of clients felt less stressed, depressed or anxious after receiving our support

For every **£1** spent on Citizens Advice BCP, we deliver:

£2.68



in savings to government and public services

£28.48



in wider economic and social benefits

£11.21



in value to the people we help



***"Thanks to our advisers and local partners, Linda found safety, support, and the strength to move forward"***

## How our advice helped Linda\*

Linda came to the UK full of hope, ready to care for others in our community. But instead of support, she was met with exploitation.

Her employer charged her £12,000 just to sponsor her visa - an illegal demand. She was promised full-time work but only given 12 hours a week. With no access to benefits and a young daughter to care for, Linda was left struggling to survive, relying on foodbanks and facing eviction.

Linda felt trapped, scared to speak out, and unsure where to turn. That's when she found us.

Our advisers listened, reassured her, and worked alongside local partners, including ATLEU and community support groups, to help Linda understand her rights and explore safe options. Together, we helped her access emergency support, report her situation confidentially, and begin rebuilding her life.

Today, Linda is more confident. She's connected to the right support, and she knows she's not alone.

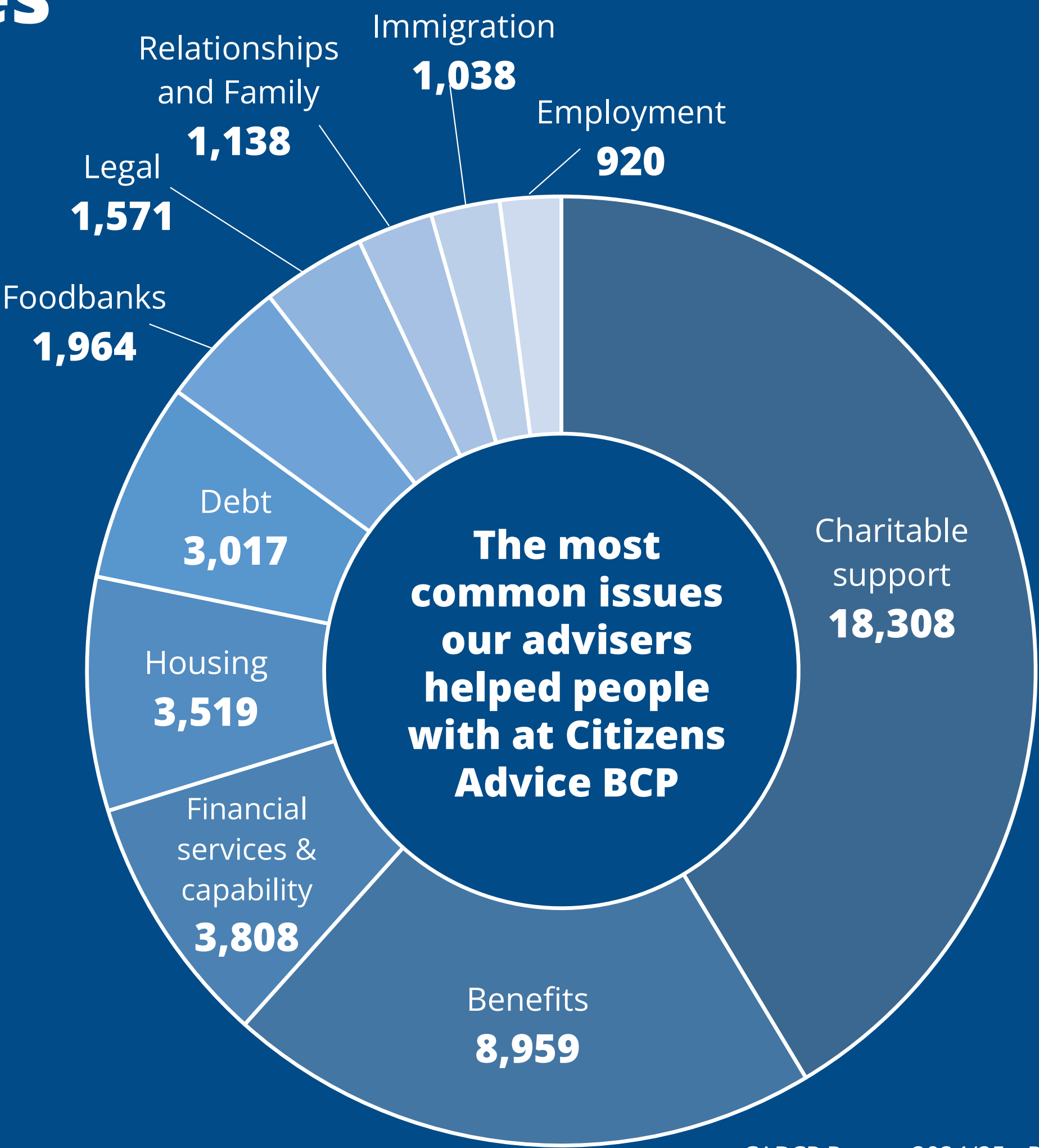
Her story is a powerful reminder: the needs of our clients are more complex than ever, and it's only through collaboration, compassion, and expertise that we can truly make a difference.

# The Issues Behind the Stories

Every year, thousands of people turn to us for help with a wide range of issues, from benefits and housing to immigration, relationships, and debt. We see both patterns and changes in the advice our communities seek. Some challenges remain consistent, while others reflect shifting circumstances and pressures.

Often, people come to us because of a presenting financial problem, but beneath the surface there are complex, multi-layered needs. Housing can be linked to debt, employment tied to health, and family issues connected to legal concerns. These overlapping challenges require our advisers to have a breadth of knowledge and skills across legal, financial, and social areas.

Beyond supporting individuals, the data we gather from these conversations gives us a unique insight into the realities people face across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. It helps us understand not just what problems exist, but how they connect and impact lives. Shaping the way we respond and advocate for change.



# Projects Making a Difference

**We run specialist projects to meet local needs.** This page showcases just a few of the many initiatives we deliver across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. These projects offer targeted support for people facing complex challenges, from housing and financial hardship to immigration and social exclusion. Many are delivered in partnership with trusted local organisations, ensuring our services are inclusive and rooted in lived experience.



## Health & Wellbeing

### Macmillan Specialist Benefits Advice

Helping people affected by cancer access the benefits they're entitled to during treatment and recovery.

### Cherry Tree Specialist Advice *(with Plants & Minds)*

Providing benefits and disability rights advice for volunteers with complex needs in a therapeutic setting.

## Housing & Stability



### Let's Talk Renting

Ongoing housing advice for private renters at risk of eviction, preventing homelessness and sustaining tenancies.

### Household Support Fund *(with BCP Council)*

Emergency grants and advice for low-income households to afford essentials like food and energy.



## Immigration & Inclusion

### Immigration Advice Project

Immigration advice and casework, helping people navigate complex processes and secure their status.

### Dorset GRT Project *(with Central Dorset CitA & Kushti Bok)*

Advice and advocacy for Gypsy, Roma & Traveller communities, removing barriers and ensuring fair access.



## Community & Outreach



### Water Debt Advice

Helping people in hardship access social tariffs, grants and affordable water bills.

### Water Lily Café Outreach

Confidential advice and support for vulnerable women affected by domestic abuse, in a safe community space.



# Partnerships

## Driving Systemic Change Together

In 2024/25, Citizens Advice BCP continued to champion collaborative approaches to tackle the root causes of disadvantage across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. Our partnerships and campaigns are not just complementary to our advice services - they are essential to creating lasting change.

### Strategic Collaboration

We worked with over 30 trusted partners, including:

- BCP Council, Macmillan Cancer Support, Trussell Trust, Independent Age, Wessex Water, DEED, and Kushti Bok.
- Delivered over 22 outreach services and 12 specialist projects, focusing on:
  - Housing insecurity
  - Immigration and inclusion
  - Mental health and wellbeing
  - Financial resilience

These partnerships enabled us to reach people in their communities, respond to complex needs, and ensure our services were inclusive and rooted in lived experience.

# Campaigns

## Advocating for Fairness and Lasting Impact

- **Housing Reform:** Successfully campaigned to unfreeze Local Housing Allowance rates in 2024/25.
- **Benefit Up-rating:** Contributed to a 6.7% increase in benefits, easing pressure on low-income households.
- **Energy Justice:** Called for social tariffs and energy market reform to support clients in fuel poverty.
- **Older People's Support:** Partnered with Independent Age to tackle food insecurity and water debt among pension-age residents.

### Emerging Research and Advocacy

- **Health Inequalities:** Launched targeted research into how financial hardship, housing insecurity, and access to services impacts physical and mental health across BCP.
- **Digital Exclusion:** Monitoring the barriers clients face in accessing online services, with a focus on older residents, low-income households, and those with disabilities.

# Volunteer Impact

## The Heart of Our Service

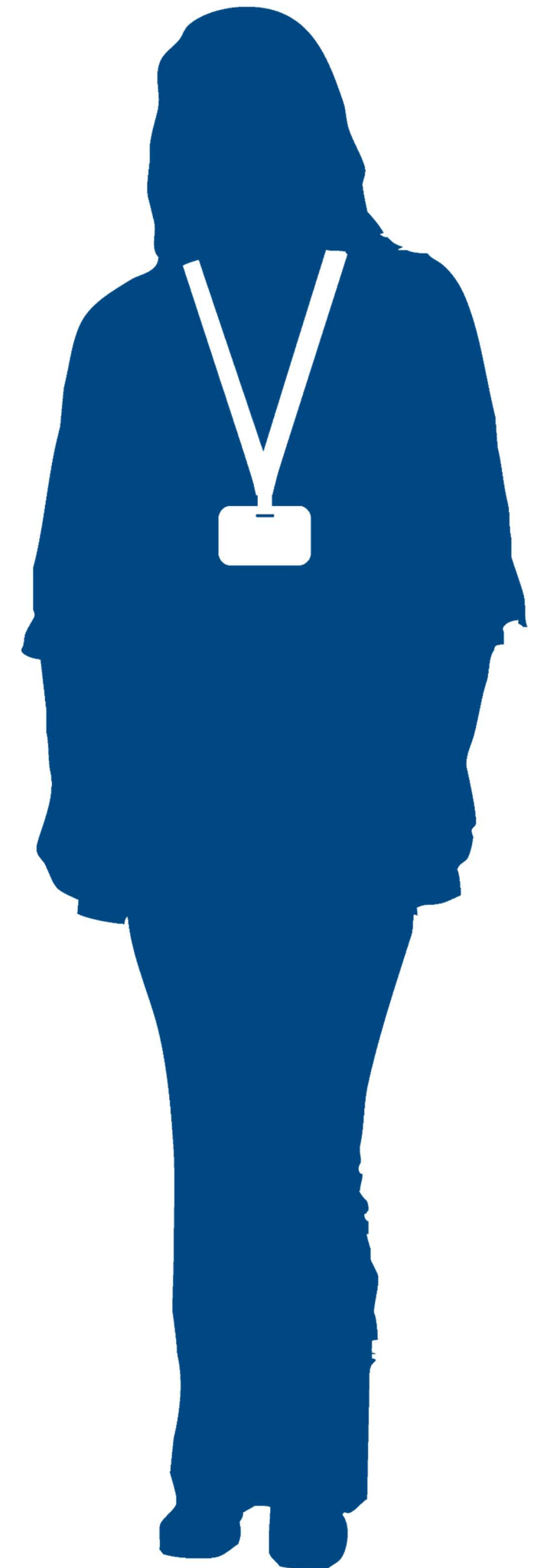
Volunteers are the backbone of Citizens Advice BCP. In 2024/25, **our volunteers gave over 14,650 hours** of their time to support clients across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. Their dedication ensures that our services remain accessible, compassionate, and responsive to the needs of our communities.

### What Volunteer Impact Looks Like:

- **136 volunteers supported our work**, from trained advisers to administrative support.
- Volunteers helped deliver advice across digital, phone and in-person channels, ensuring clients could access help in the way that suited them best.
- Their work contributed to over 47,000 issues resolved, helping people find a way forward with housing, debt, benefits, and more.

### Our Promise to Our Volunteers

- We will invest in training and development, ensuring volunteers feel confident and supported.
- We will create opportunities for volunteers to engage meaningfully with our mission and values.
- We will celebrate their contributions as essential to our impact and success.



***“Advice isn’t just about solving problems. It’s about preventing them. Every conversation is a chance to reduce stress, restore confidence, and build a healthier, fairer future for our communities.”***

## **Looking Ahead: Our Vision**

### **Shaping a Fairer, Healthier Future Together**

As we move into 2025/26 and beyond, our vision is to deepen our impact across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole by:

- **Championing Preventative Approaches:** Recognising that timely advice and advocacy can reduce pressure on health services and improve wellbeing.
- **Expanding Our Role in Public Health:** Securing new partnerships and funding to support people before crisis hits.
- **Harnessing Innovation:** Exploring AI-driven tools to enhance advice delivery and operational efficiency.
- **Growing Our Volunteer Network:** Creating structured pathways for development and engagement.
- **Strengthening Our Voice:** Enhancing evidence-led policy work, media engagement, and lived experience advocacy.
- **Building Inclusive Partnerships:** Co-producing solutions with communities, funders and local organisations.

We remain committed to transparency, collaboration and purpose-driven leadership, ensuring our services reflect the realities of those we serve.

**Together, we’ll keep adapting, innovating, and standing up for fairness.**



# Thank You to Everyone Who Makes Our Work Possible

## Your Support Creates Change

The support we receive from community partners, businesses and funders helps us reach thousands across BCP each year. While we can't name everyone, behind every number is a network of people and organisations driving change.

We especially acknowledge those who provided financial support for our services and projects, including:

BCP Council	Macmillan Caring Locally	Christchurch Magdalen Trust
Macmillan Cancer Support	Dorset Community Foundation	Citizens Advice Network
National Lottery Community Fund	Independent Age	Seetec
J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation	Wessex Water	Heritage Lottery Fund
Trussell Trust	Bournemouth Water	Plants and Minds ( <i>Cherry Tree Nursery</i> )

We're also grateful to the organisations who helped us reach and support people in their communities, including:

Community Action Network (CAN)	St Mungo's	Access to Food Partnership Members
Dorset Mind	Shelter	Safe and Sound
Homelessness Partnership BCP	BCP Age Friendly Community	Bournemouth University
Faithworks	YMCA	Routes to Roots
International Care Network (ICN)	Access Wellbeing	University Hospitals Dorset
Water Lily Café	Kushti Bok	Bourne Free
Somerford ARC	BCP Libraries	Dorset Race Equality Council (DREC)
West Howe Community Enterprises	Poverty Truth Commission BCP	Dorset VCSA

And many more local venues, networks and volunteers who help us connect, listen and respond.

Your support is helping to build a stronger, fairer and healthier BCP. **Thank you!**

# We are the people's champion

Citizens Advice helps people find a way forward.

We provide free, confidential and independent advice to help people overcome their problems. We are a voice for our clients and consumers on the issues that matter to them.

We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment.

We're here for everyone.

**[citizensadvicebcp.org.uk](https://citizensadvicebcp.org.uk)**

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Registered company number 03537836  
Registered charity number 1074727

