

2009 - 2010 Client Feedback

The results of our 8th annual **Client Feedback Survey** (from a record 864 completed questionnaires) show that we have maintained public satisfaction with our service at a high level.

Nearly all respondents (99.0%) were satisfied with the overall level of service and 99.8% said they would recommend us to others.



A high proportion of clients (92.9%) reported that our service had made a positive difference to their situation and 80.7% reported that their confidence and ability to deal with problems had improved as a result of the service they received.

Comments from clients included:

"It was definitely worth taking the time to visit. I would certainly recommend your friendly capable service to others":

***Right from my on-line request through initial telephone call to actual appointment all staff have been most helpful. Thank you all. Yes!! I certainly will be back for more help, if needed";**

"Very friendly service. I was so worried about everything but my adviser really helped ease my fears. I have now gone on to sort out my financial difficulties";

"CAB has taught me not to be scared of situations that happen in life, they really are here to help and made me realise not to bury my head in the sand".

Campaigning for Change

A twin aim of the CAB service is to exercise a responsible influence on social policy and to campaign for improvements in policies and services where the evidence from our clients' enquiries indicates that this is needed.

In this way we hope to benefit many more people than come to use the CAB by helping to prevent recurring problems. For example, our statistics on trends in enquiry issues have been helping Hillingdon Council monitor impacts of the 'credit crunch' such as **housing debt and fuel poverty**.

Motivated by our Social Policy co-ordinator our advisers sent **479 Evidence Forms** in 2009-10 to Citizens Advice to help national lobbying, making HECA the second top-performing CAB service in London.

Our evidence on the problems facing local people has been included in Citizens Advice Evidence Reports to Government, MPs and other policy-makers.



Commitment to Quality and Equality

Our client profile for 2009-2010 continues to show that our services are succeeding in reaching all sections of our local community, with **over 86 nationalities using our services**, from young adults to 85+ and with proportionate representation of disabled people.



Our services were audited this year by Citizens Advice and we were re-awarded the Community Legal Service Quality Mark ('general help').

We were also re-awarded the Quality Mark at 'with casework' level in Debt and Welfare Benefits enquiry areas.

Training played a key role in maintaining the high standards of the service with 49 staff and volunteers attending 92 days of training.

TELEPHONE ADVICE LINE

HILLINGDON ADVICE & INFORMATION LINE: 0844 848 7903

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 9.30am to 12.30pm and 1- 3pm.

Automated information service at other times.

(Calls cost 5p per minute from a BT landline)

TELEPHONE CALL-BACK REQUESTS

can now also be made via our website.

WEBSITE INFORMATION

www.hillingdoncab.org.uk

For opening times, up-to-date information, a debt self-help pack, project reports, volunteer recruitment application packs, frequently asked questions and how to support us, visit our website.

Published by Citizens Advice, www.adviceguide.org.uk -

- Puts reliable, up-to-date information at your fingertips
- Points to reliable sources of advice on a wide range of topics
- In 15 Asian and European community languages including BSL

ADDRESSES & CONTACT INFORMATION

HAYES CAB OFFICE, Hayes One Stop,
49 - 51 Station Road, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 4BE

RUISLIP CAB OFFICE, 9 Eastcote Road, Ruislip,
Middlesex HA4 8BD

UXBRIDGE CAB OFFICE, Colonnade, Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

Registered office: Hillingdon and Ealing Citizens Advice,
Key House, 106 High Street, Yiewsley UB7 7BQ

HILLINGDON AND EALING CITIZENS ADVICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010



Our Aims

To provide the advice that people need for the problems they face and

To improve the policies and practices that affect peoples lives

Our Principles

The Citizens Advice Service provides *free, independent, confidential and impartial advice* to everyone on their rights and responsibilities.

We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

We would like to thank the following funders:-

- London Borough of Hillingdon
- Hillingdon Primary Care Trust
- Hillingdon Community Trust
- Hillingdon Homes Ltd
- Veolia Water Trust
- Citizens Advice



2009 - 10 Outputs and Outcomes

In a phenomenal 70th year Hillingdon and Ealing Citizens Advice dealt with 35,715 enquiry issues through its three bureaux and its advice projects (compared with 25,937 in 2008-9 and 21,374 in 2007-8). The breakdown is given below.



Our 1st Annual Advice Fair took place in The Pavilions Shopping Mall (Uxbridge)

Type of Enquiry:

Benefits	11,621
Debt	8,538
Legal	5,426
Housing	2,382
Employment	1,815
Signposting	1,805
Relationships	936
Immigration	695
Other	2,497
Total	35,715

Outcomes of our advice work:

Financial outcomes reached a record total of **£1,757,105**, a 55% increase on last year. This total additional income gained for our clients as a direct result of the advice and assistance we gave brought real benefits for people in vulnerable households living below the poverty line and for local businesses where much of this additional income is spent.

Non-financial positive outcomes were also up 54% on 2008-9 and totalled 512. These included 218 affordable repayment plans negotiated with creditors and landlords, 106 token debt payment plans of £1 per week accepted, 35 cases of homelessness averted, 18 cases of improved housing prospects and repairs, 21 of bailiff action averted and a further 21 of recovery action put on hold and 18 of interest charges frozen.

Impact: these results indicate the contribution HECA is making to local priorities to improve health and wellbeing, tackle inequality, give people more control over their lives and promote financial and social inclusion in strong and active communities.

Advice Lifeline Service

With the support of Hillingdon Community Trust and the London Borough of Hillingdon we were able to respond to the impact of the economic downturn on local people by enhancing access to advice and information with a new Advice Lifeline Service.



This enabled HECA to achieve record levels of outputs and outcomes in 2009-10 as the high levels of problem debt showed no signs of abating, and mortgage debt in particular rose substantially. Overall, advisers in HECA dealt with 8,538 debt issues and gave assistance to people owing a record total of **£16,286,412 (up 41% on 2008-9)**.

Chair's Letter

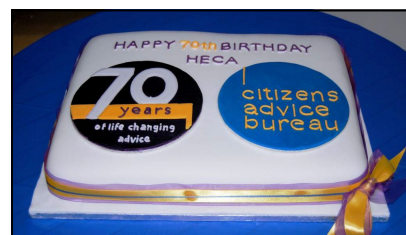
Welcome to our Annual Report for the year ending 31st March 2010 and for the 70th year of the CAB service in Hillingdon.



This was a year in which our challenge was to respond to the impact of the 'credit crunch' and live up to the confidence of our main funders who gave us additional resources to meet the rising needs for advice as people struggled to deal with unmanageable debts, new benefit claims and very real threats of redundancy, bankruptcy and homelessness.

I am delighted to report that HECA met that challenge by achieving its best results in 16 years (and very likely in 70 years) and to thank Hillingdon Community Trust, London Borough of Hillingdon and Citizens Advice for its Additional Hours of Advice funding that enabled us to scale up and achieve these results.

I am also pleased to welcome a new funder of money advice, Veolia Water Trust, and several funding partnerships that have enabled us to build on our track record for delivering financial capability training to help prevent problem debt in the future.



I must thank our 53 volunteers, including the Brunel students, and the pro bono solicitors who worked with our staff to make this increase in service delivery possible, and all our funders for their continued support.

In October 2009 we celebrated our 70th anniversary of the CAB in Hillingdon. Staff and volunteers assembled a timeline of displays demonstrating that the service is as relevant now as it ever was: not only recognised by all sections of the community as the 'first port of call' for high quality advice and information but also acknowledged for its unique social policy input and responsive, accessible, innovative and good value services.

Cheryl Evans - Chair of the HECA Trustee Board

Financial Capability

In the latter part of 2009-10 our new Financial Capability Trainer, Sue Carr, delivered 15 educational training sessions under Money Active, Save Xmas and Energy Best Deal agreements.

Starting with our own staff at Uxbridge CAB, Sue Carr has gone on to provide training sessions to a wide range of groups, including Paradigm Housing, Yeading Community House, Tasman House and Mill House (for mental health clients), Hillingdon Rethink Carers Support Group, Afghan and Asian Women's Groups and an International Women's Day event in Northwood.



Outreach Advice Services

Children's Centres Outreach

Now in its second year and responding to high levels of demand, our adviser Teresa Dalton dealt with 1,794 enquiry issues and helped parents of young children at four of the new Children's Centres in Hillingdon to deal with £525,280 of problem debt, also bringing in £407,264 in additional income.



Mental Health Outreach

The fourth full year of our part-time money advice service for users of mental health centres in Hillingdon has been its most successful ever as clients' needs continued to be high and advice was given in response to 1,244 enquiry issues.

Assistance was provided with record amounts of debt (£613,776, up 126% on 2008-9) and additional income of £158,773 was gained for clients as a result of casework.

GP Surgeries Outreach

This year our adviser helped patients of Harefield and Yiewsley Health Centres and The Belmont Medical Centre deal with record amounts of debt (£448,142, up 52% on 2008-9). She also brought in £208,301 in additional income, bringing the total over **eight years of the service to £1,263,722**.



Money Advice Services

Money Advice for Homebuyers

In March 2009 we started a new service providing money advice to struggling homebuyers as part of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme and in the first 12 months our adviser dealt with 67 referrals. Clients owed £907,596 of which 52% was mortgage debt. Repossessions were averted by increasing income (18%), successful negotiations with lenders (35%) and referrals back for Mortgage Rescue after advice (44%).

Money Advice for Tenants

Our 'fast track' money advice service for tenants with rent arrears was funded for a fourth year by Hillingdon Homes Ltd.

Vivian Oluka dealt with 945 issues raised by tenants who had debts of £696,168 and negotiated affordable repayment plans to reduce the risk of losing their homes.

