

Trustees needed!



The start of 2025 has been a hive of activity at Citizens Advice South Hams. We're launching a new project to help families across the South Hams by partnering with [Education South West](#) and putting an adviser directly into local schools. You can read more about the project on page 2.

We celebrated Student Volunteering Week and recognised the reciprocal benefits of having student volunteers at Citizens Advice South Hams - volunteering with us gives students real life experience and enables them to learn from the diverse group of expertise and experience we have within our staff and volunteer team, and having a youthful injection into our organisation gives us a new and fresh perspective too. Our door is always open to students and young people looking for new opportunities.

We've been looking back at our work over 2024 and seeing the positive impact we've made to so many people living across the South Hams. I am incredibly proud of the work of our entire team who work together to achieve positive outcomes for all of those who come to us for help and advice. You can read our latest Totnes impact report on [page 3](#).

We're currently looking for new trustees to help lead our charity. Trustees play a vital role in setting the strategic direction of our charity and help make sure the service meets the needs of the local community. We welcome applications from diverse backgrounds and experience.

For more information and [to apply, see our website](#), or if you would like an informal chat about the role, please send me an email directly.

Wishing you a warm and healthy Spring!

Best wishes,
Janie

JANIE MOOR
Chief Officer
Citizens Advice South Hams
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Citizens Advice in schools project



This Spring we're launching a new initiative to bring a specialist adviser into local schools to help families in need.

The adviser will be integrated into the school support teams, and working closely with identified families, will provide information and assistance on a range of issues, including:

- Navigating welfare benefits and financial entitlements (including the Household Support Fund)
- Accessing charitable support such as food banks and grants
- Addressing debt and budgeting concerns
- Accessing housing support and preventing housing issues
- Understanding employment rights and childcare options
- Improving energy efficiency within the home and accessing energy bill support.

Our community includes a number of families facing financial hardships, housing insecurity, and difficulties in accessing essential services. In the year to March 2023, more than 2,000

children under 16 in the South Hams were living in relative poverty (about one-in-seven children). Many parents and guardians, especially those with limited resources, often lack the time or means to visit our main Follaton office or one of our outreach centres. By placing a Citizens Advice adviser in a school setting, we can bridge this gap, offering convenient and confidential support in a familiar environment.

We will initially be working with [Education South West](#) schools including King Edward VI Community College in Totnes, Dartmouth Academy and Kingsbridge Community College.

If you would like to make a donation to this project, please do so through our [donations page](#).

Devon Housing survey

We are collecting information on the condition of housing locally. If you rent from a private landlord, your local council or a housing association, would you help us by [completing a short questionnaire](#) to share your experience about aspects like repairs and maintenance?

We will analyse all the data and share the results with local MPs, district councils, housing associations and other interested groups – demonstrating the condition of rented housing and the type of problems people are experiencing.

Student Volunteering Week!



In mid-February we joined other organisations across the country celebrating the contribution of our student volunteers. These volunteers bring so much to Citizens Advice South Hams and we're always blown away by their dedication and hard work.

Many of our student volunteers are law students but we also have a social work student on placement.

Working with Citizens Advice gives students an opportunity to gain real world experience and deepen their understanding of the issues people are facing and how they can be helped. We're proud that many students who begin volunteering often move into employment with us.

If you're a student looking to gain new skills and confidence, Citizens Advice South Hams is a great place to be. Find out more at southhamscab.org.uk/get-involved

Our impact in Totnes

Last year, we helped 648 people living in the Totnes areas with 4,152 advice issues. We have seen a 17% increase in benefits issues compared with the previous year and a 68% increase in charitable support and food bank issues. It is clear that the cost of living crisis is far from over and many people are still struggling.

We continue to have a weekly outreach at St John's Church in Bridgetown every Wednesday morning 9.30am to 12.30pm. If you know anyone who needs support or advice please direct them to our services. All of our advice is free, confidential, independent and impartial.

Read the full impact report [here](#).



How our advice helped Sue



Sue lives alone and has severe disabilities. Through our partnership work with Totnes Caring she was identified as someone who needed help filling in benefit application forms as she has a very low income. Our adviser visited her at home as she was unable to get the office. After helping with her the forms, Sue was awarded Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit, and Severe Disability Premium (SDP). Sue now has an extra £8,631 a year coming in to help her manage.

During our interactions we also established that Sue had storage heaters in her home that she wasn't sure how to use the properly. Our energy team conducted a thorough energy assessment and advised her on how to effectively use her heaters, and switched her to a cheaper energy tariff. We also provided her with a hot water bottle to help keep her warm throughout the Winter and will continue to work with Totnes Caring to see if there is any additional help she needs.

Volunteer with us!

Wondering how you can help people in your community? Volunteer with us!

Volunteering is now possible from home or the office. Our training programme is a mix of online learning and shadowing more experienced advisers to get practical hands on experience. Plenty of support is available as you train to make sure you can give the advice that helps people move forward with the issues they face.

For more information and [to apply, see our website.](#)

HOW TO GET ADVICE



0808 278 7948 (freephone)
Monday to Friday
10am to 4pm



Check out information on a wide range of subjects on our **website:**
citizensadvicesouthhams.org.uk



Come and see us
Follaton House, Totnes
Monday to Friday
10am - 1pm, 2pm - 4pm

Weekly outreaches in Totnes
Ivybridge, Dartmouth and
Kingsbridge.

[See our website for details of times and locations](#)