

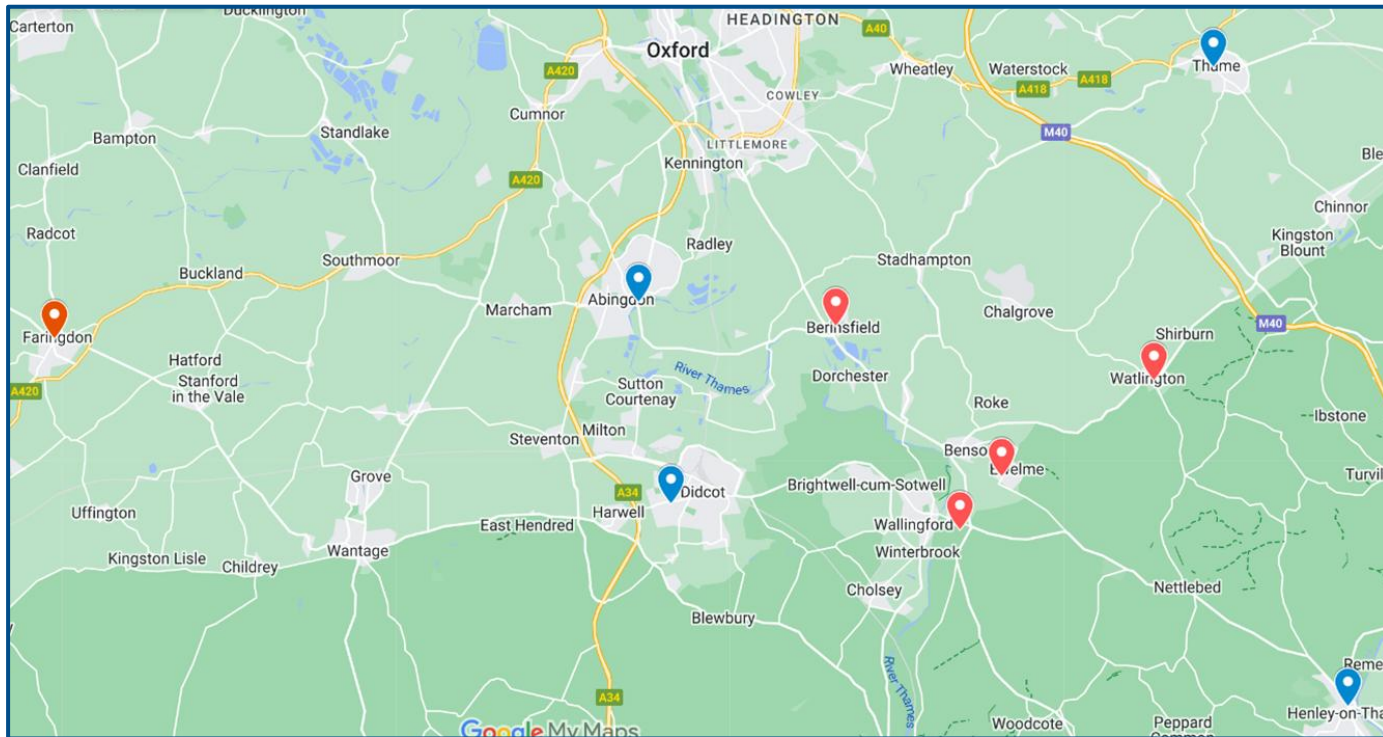
The difference we make to Thame

Debbie Watts

**Chief Officer, Oxfordshire
South & Vale Citizens Advice
March 2025**



Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South & Vale



Offices (Blue)

- Abingdon
- Didcot
- Henley
- Thame

Outreaches (Red)

- Berinsfield
- Faringdon
- Watlington
- RAF Benson (suspended)
- Wallingford

What we do

We help people with a range of problems including issues with housing, debt, benefits, employment, relationships and consumer rights. Often people have more than one issue they need help with.

Advice



Help to Claim



Debt



Citizens Advice Thame

In the year 2024, advisers in Thame helped **980 unique individuals (up 8.5%)** with **2258 issues (up 19%)**.

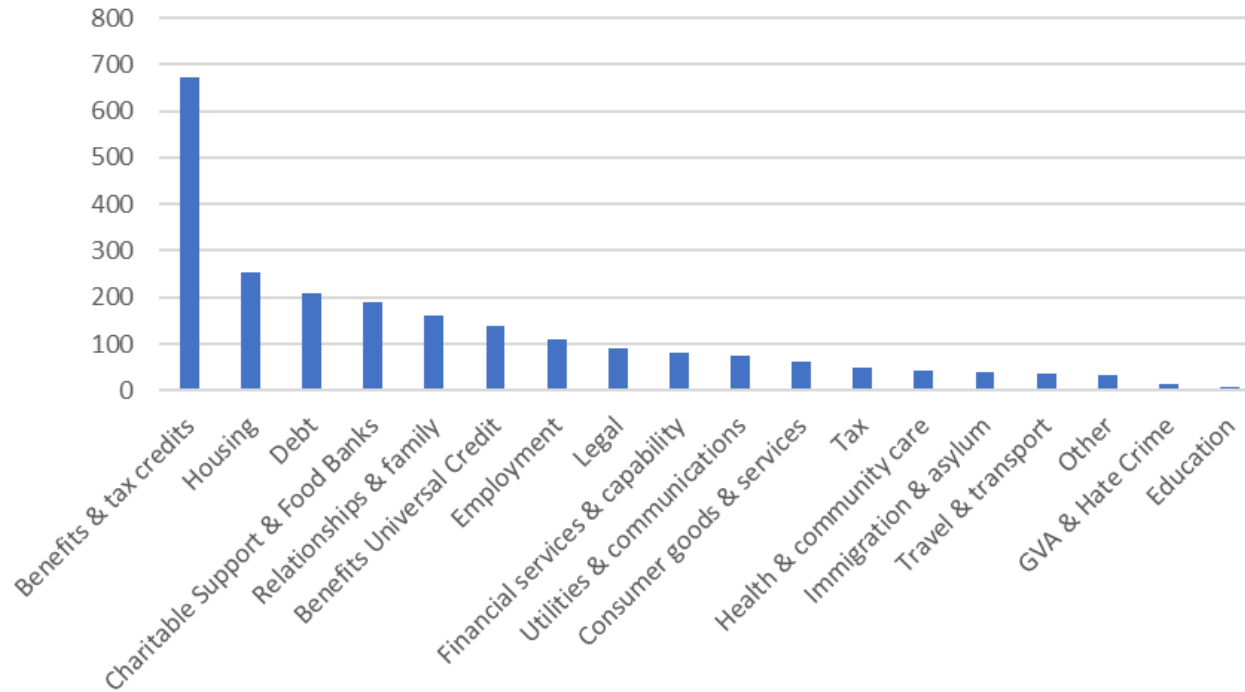
Some clients we will see multiple times throughout the year.

Last year, for residents in Thame ward, Citizens Advice facilitated nearly **£230k** in financial outcomes:

Outcomes	
Income gain	£182,567
Re-imbursements, services, loans	£4,273
Debts written off	£38,341
Other	£4,200



Issues that clients supported by the Thame office are seeking support with.



Top Benefit Issues:

- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- General Benefit Entitlement
- Council Tax Allowance

Top Debt Issues:

- Debt Assessment
- Council Tax Arrears
- Other debt (insurance, student loans, misc)

Services offered at Thame

- Temporary Move: The arrangements at Thame are working reasonably well.
- Administrative hub has been established High Street – open Monday, Wednesday & Thursday (not suitable for face to face client work)
- Drop-in service at the Library on Wednesday. Many thanks to the Library management
- Face to face appointments being hosted at the Town Hall. Many thanks to the Town Hall team!
- Telephone service available 5 days a week
- Wonderful Thame Town effort!

Construction Works at Market House

- Construction commenced on Market House in February
- Moved into temporary hub on the High Street (Cost £5,000 rent plus expenses)
- Library and Town Hall providing space for free
- We have asked SODC for a rental holiday while vacated – awaiting confirmation
- We hope to return in August.
- We are currently 'out of lease'. SODC would like to increase annual rent from £6500 to £9645 – we are currently in negotiation
- While Council have to make good before we reoccupy delighted to say Thame Inner Wheel have made contact and offered to complete a deep clean and redecorate where needed before we move back in!



What our clients told us in 2024



85%

said they were
likely to
recommend
Citizens Advice*



84%

said that they
had been
helped to find a
way forward*



73%

said that their
problem had
been
resolved*



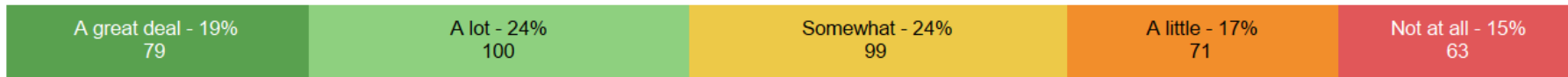
76%

said that they
had found the
service easy to
access*

* Based on independent phone survey of clients 13-18 weeks after advice 2024

The Health Benefits 23/24

As a result of the help you have received from Citizens Advice, do you feel less stressed, depressed or anxious? (Positive = A great deal + A lot + Somewhat)



As a result of the help you have received from Citizens Advice, do you feel your physical health has improved? (Positive = A great deal + A lot + Somewhat)



I found the gentleman who helped me was very calm, listened to what my problem was and how it was effecting me mentally and financially, as I am a full time Carer for my husband for the last 10 years. I am still needing advice from Citizens Advice. I am relieved that I can still make an appointment to see the same person who has helped me. Which I think is great as you don't have keep going over the problem,

Thank you all for being there for me everyone I met was polite and friendly.

Annual People Survey Results 2024

97%

Would recommend our
charity as a place to
work or volunteer

94%

Felt they had the
information and resources
to do their job

93%

Felt Citizens Advice
cares about their
wellbeing

98%

Felt people have
treated each other
with respect and
fairness

88%

Felt they had the
opportunities to
develop their skills
and knowledge

88%

Felt their views were
listened and valued

**citizens
advice**

**Oxfordshire
South & Vale**





Our value to society

For every **£1** invested in our service in 2023/2024, we generated:

£4.61 in savings to government and public services (fiscal benefits)

Total: £2,751,269

£31.06 in wider economic and social benefits (public value)

Total: £18,540,026

£13.34 in financial value to the people we help (specific outcomes to individuals)

Total: £8,203,054

Over £500k in the value of volunteering

*Cost benefit model approved by HM Treasury. Methodology set out in national CA technical report. Figures reflect FY 2023/24

Research and campaigns

Understanding Challenges:

- We engage with a diverse range of people, providing unique insights into current societal challenges.
- We submit **local evidence** to the national office.
- This data helps shape policies in **government** and **utility companies** to improve services for people.
- The **February Dashboard** highlights the continued impact of the **Cost of Living crisis** across the UK.
- We will be responding to the Governments Green Paper on Disability Welfare. Please see initial comments **from Citizens Advice Chief Executive Dame Claire Moriarty**

Visit from Henley & Thame MP – Freddie van Mierlo:

- Discussed a wide range of client issues with our team.
- Witnessed a live complaint about **Thames Water**, aligning with his advocacy work.
- Acknowledged our **financial challenges** as a charity, particularly regarding the **new Employers' National Insurance rules**.



Changes are afoot!

Citizens Advice Oxfordshire Merger

- From **1st April 2025**, Oxfordshire South & Vale Citizens Advice will merge with Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire and Citizens Advice Oxford.
- The new organisation will be called **Citizens Advice Oxfordshire**.
- All **current client services** will be maintained.
- Exploring **new and innovative ways** to reach those most in need.
- **Stronger together** – merger ensures greater sustainability. The merger allows for better use of **combined resources, expertise, and capabilities** to enhance client support.
- Commitment to delivering **exceptional, quality service** to the people of Thame remains steadfast.

Change of management of Thame Office

- Tricia Hook, Advice Services Manager of Thame for the last 5 years is retiring.
- She has been an exceptional, passionate supporter of Citizens Advice and will remain so.

Citizens Advice Thame

Tricia Hook, Advice Services Manager Thame (until end of May 2025)
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March 2025