Our history and what’s next

For everyone, for 80 years

citizens advice

4 September 1939
The day after World War II begins, Citizens Advice open in 200 locations to help people with the impacts. **Our Horsham, Haywards Heath and Worthing centres were among the first to open.**

1940
Advisers deal with rationing, displacement and overcrowding issues and help people locate missing relatives

1941
Citizens Advice introduce its first mobile service - a horsebox. This was able to travel to areas affected by the blitz, to help those most in need

Citizens Advice mobile horsebox

Wartime volunteer at Citizens Advice Guildford
Photo credit: Historic England

1941
Citizens Advice influence the rationing policy to secure extra clothing coupons for pregnant women

1944
Advisers successfully argue for an urgent need for evacuation of children from London during the German bombing campaign

1945
Horsham
CAB closed at the end of the Second World War

1946
Citizens Advice continue to influence rationing policy post-war, including securing more cheese for gardeners

1946
An influx of enquiries around family problems caused by the war, including increasing divorce rates and family break-ups

Citizens Advice office in the 1950s

1955
Crawley
CAB opened

1957
The Rent Act comes into force, deregulating the private rented sector. Housing issues make up 25% of all enquiries with both landlords and tenants asking what this means for them

1957 Shoreham and Southwick CAB opened

1958
The total number of enquiries reaches over 1 million

1959
Consumer problems increase and Citizens Advice submit evidence to the Molony Committee, leading to better rights for consumers taking credit

1960
The number of enquiries on consumer issues doubles in just 2 years

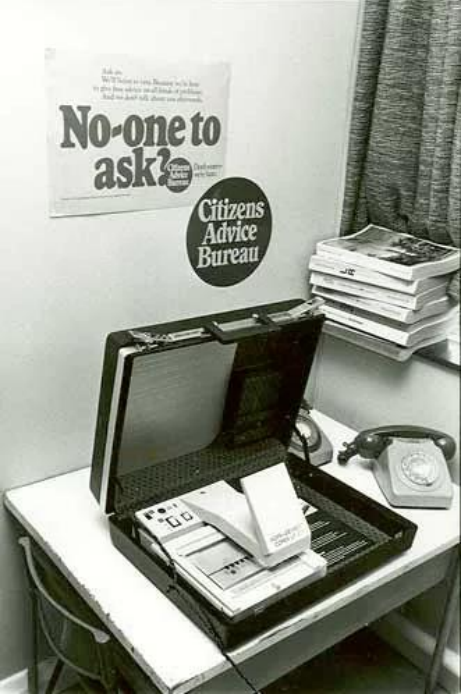
1960
The resilience of the service is rewarded, as central government reinstates funding in appreciation of services rendered to the community

1963
Citizens Advice provide evidence to the Ministry of Housing to help inform new housing policy

1965
The total number of enquiries reaches 1.25 million

1965
Horsham CAB reopened in North Street

Citizens Advice on wheels



Citizens Advice outreach kit from the 1970s

1972
The Citizens Advice service becomes independent

1972
Citizens Advice submit evidence to the Lane Committee on the working of the Abortion Act, following legalisation of abortion in 1968. It showed that more publicity was needed to the provisions of the Act to both the general public and doctors

1972
Citizens Advice volunteers help Ugandan Asian refugees arriving into the UK with documentation after arriving into Stansted airport

1973
Lancing CAB opened, moving to its current premises in the Parish Hall in 1976

1975
The total number of enquiries reaches 2.7 million

1977
Citizens Advice help the Office of Fair Trading establish the true extent of many consumer problems

1980s
The first paid member of staff for Crawley CAB was appointed

1984
For the first time, social security is the most common enquiry, reflecting the increasing numbers of people who are reliant on it

Outside Citizens Advice Camden in 1988

1984
A review of Housing Benefit regulation is announced after Citizens Advice present evidence to parliament

1985
The miners' strike leads to a spike of enquiries on benefits, fuel, housing and consumer debts

1987
Enquiries about benefits and help to understand major welfare reforms increase throughout the whole of the 1980s, but are particularly high between 1987 and 1989

An adviser in Mitcham, Surrey, in the 1990s

1990
The first half of the 1990s Citizens Advice help people struggling with poll tax arrears, and then with council tax arrears from 1993 onwards

1993
Spike of enquiries around the Child Support Act

1998
Citizens Advice successfully campaign against changes in court fees which made it difficult for poor people to gain access to justice

1999
Self-help website advice.org.uk is launched

Advice at Citizens Advice Whitechapel

2001
Citizens Advice launch emergency advice services for communities affected by Foot and Mouth disease and negotiates with banks and building societies to ensure sympathetic treatment of rural businesses whose income is virtually stopped by the crisis

2003
Citizens Advice become the first in the sector to audit the quality of their advice

2003
Enquiries on tax credits rise and a high number of enquiries around welfare reform during the whole decade

2005
Citizens Advice issue a super-complaint to the Office of Fair Trading on the cost and effectiveness of payment protection insurance (PPI)

2007
Citizens Advice receive a large number of enquiries around the non-return of tenancy deposits up until 2007, when a new tenancy deposit protection law comes into force after 15 years of campaigning on the issue

2008
An influx of enquiries from those who had very high levels of borrowing up until the financial crash in 2008, after which enquiries around unemployment rise

Testing web chat at Citizens Advice Annual Conference

2014
Citizens Advice present evidence to government and regulators showing a growth in bad lending and debt collection practices by payday lenders. This results in a cap on the cost of payday loans and tightened regulation

2014
Citizens Advice telephone service 'Adviceline' takes its millionth call

2015
Citizens Advice take on 2 new services, Pension Wise and the Witness Service

2015
Citizens Advice introduce web chat and begin a major redesign of its digital services in line with how people search for help online

2016
For the first time, people accessing citizensadvice.org.uk via a mobile is higher than those using a laptop or desktop

2016
The government announces a ban on letting agents' fees in England after years of Citizens Advice campaigning

2017
Citizens Advice present evidence on problems with the Universal Credit rollout to the government. After months of campaigning, the government announces £1.5 billion in extra funding

2017
The Supreme Court rules that employment tribunal fees are unlawful, after years of Citizens Advice campaigning to make fees fairer

2017
Citizens Advice persuade energy networks to give money back to people in Great Britain after it found they made £7.5 billion in excess profits

2017
Citizens Advice telephone service 'Adviceline' takes its 4 millionth call

2017
Citizens Advice roll out Casebook, a new case management system, across the service

2018
Citizens Advice secured funding to deliver a service that helps clients make a Universal Credit claim

2018
Citizens Advice issue a super-complaint to the Competition and Markets Authority as loyal customers are paying too much for services like broadband

We’re looking to the future

We’re continuing to transform our services to meet the changing needs of the people we help, keep pace with rapid technological advances and stay ahead.

Our Vision for 2022:

- You won’t ever struggle to get help from us
- Our service will be 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

Thank you

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