

## Wiltshire Council

### Cabinet

15 July 2024

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**Subject:** Wiltshire Community Advice and Support Services

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities, Leisure, and Libraries

**Key Decision:** Key

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#### Executive Summary

Wiltshire Citizens Advice (WCA) was first commissioned 1 April 2015 for a period of 2 years with an option to extend for an additional year. The optional extension was utilised, and exemptions have been used thereafter to extend the contract period to 31 March 2025.

WCA supported 14,902 clients in 2022/23, which represents 3% of the overall Wiltshire population. 49% of the WCA clients supported were disabled or had a long-term health condition. Most interactions (62%) took place over the phone, with only 5% being in-person. Many people choose to access advice & information from WCA because it is a 3rd party & independent from the council. Bringing services in-house may discourage some residents from accessing help & support. In all the conversations commissioners had with other local authorities and internal stakeholders, the cost-of-living crisis was mentioned heavily. It was stated that more people are needing to rely on WCA services because of this crisis.

Six options were considered:

1. Do not re-commission the service.
2. Re-commission with uplift mechanism.
3. Re-commission with no uplift mechanism.
4. Deliver the service in-house
5. Deliver the service with a Hybrid approach (some elements in-house, some external)
6. Tender/Direct award to Wiltshire Citizens Advice for Core and Carers Elements only with an uplift mechanism

#### Proposals

That Cabinet:

- 1) Approves option 2 - the recommissioning, procurement and implementation of the Core and Carers elements of the Wiltshire Community Advice and Support Service for a minimum of five years with the option to extend for an additional two years with an uplift mechanism.
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of Commissioning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities, Leisure, and Libraries to award the new contract, including the taken of all necessary steps and the production of all associated documentation.

### **Reason for Proposals**

Option 2 will give the Council greater consistency of service across the county and the opportunity for more robust contract management.

Only tendering for core and carers reduces the financial risk and pressure to the council if the grants for the refugee programme and Ukraine support were not forthcoming in future years or should the team decide to invest this money in different services.

A wide range of council service areas make daily referrals to Wiltshire Citizens Advice service and it is a service relied on heavily by Wiltshire residents. Not having this service in place would place unprecedented demand on council teams, who are not currently resourced to meet this demand and customers would not receive as timely as response, should the service be brought inhouse.

Additionally, Wiltshire Council does not have Financial Conduct Accreditation (FCA) or Advice Quality Standard (AQS) accreditation, which means that it cannot provide specialist advice around debt and housing issues. Further to this, Wiltshire Council is not a charity, this prevents bidding on Charity specific funding which the current provider uses to bolster services. Not having this service in place would mean Wiltshire residents would be unable to seek specialist financial and housing advice.

**Lucy Townsend**  
**Corporate Director for People**

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#### Purpose of Report

1. This report makes proposals to Cabinet which support the successful tender and contract award for a new citizens advice service, as the current contract expires on 31 March 2025.

#### Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

Ref	Commissioning Aims	Business Plan Objectives
1	Support residents to successfully manage the cost of living crisis	Prevention and early intervention Understanding communities
2	Improve residents' quality of life & wellbeing	Improving social mobility & tackling inequalities
3	Adopting a holistic support model	Working Together
4	Those who are in most need of the service can best access it	Improving social mobility & tackling inequalities Understanding communities

2. As outlined above in the table, the commissioning aims for this service link in with each of the four Wiltshire Council Business Plan priorities.
3. From research commissioners undertook with other Local Authorities, it was evident that each locality's Citizens Advice service had a huge impact on supporting residents to navigate the cost of living crisis, which links into Wiltshire Council's Business Plan priorities.
4. This research also revealed that it is most beneficial for the service provider to have offices in the most deprived areas (according to JSNA data), to ensure that those who most need the service can access it, thereby improving social mobility and tackling inequality.

#### Background

5. Wiltshire Citizens Advice currently provides free, personalised and independent advice and information services to residents, enabling them to find a way forward and successfully deal with

life's problems. The aim of this service is to promote and enable Wiltshire residents to improve their quality of life and wellbeing.

6. WCA advice and information services can be accessed via email, phone, online or in person in relation to:
  - **Benefits and tax credits** to working or unemployed, sick or disabled, a parent, a young person, an older person or a veteran. Also, information about council tax and housing costs, national insurance, payment of benefits and problems with benefits.
  - **Work and employee issues**, understanding employee rights and how to solve problems.
  - **Debt and money**, dealing with financial issues like credit, mortgages and debt management.
  - **Consumer issues** in relation to purchasing, returning items, refunds and understanding consumer rights and how to solve problems.
  - **Family & relationship**, issues if relationships break down, how to deal with making a will, registering a birth or changing your name, and where else to go for help.
  - **Housing information** about rights and responsibilities of renting or buying a home or just finding somewhere to live and advice on handling problems with landlords or mortgages and help to avoid losing your home.
  - **Law & courts**, legal system, understanding your rights, as well as what to do if you face discrimination, need legal advice or have to go to court without a lawyer.
  - **Discrimination**, advice to understand the different types of discrimination and sources of help to take action.
  - **Immigration**, advice and support about staying in the UK, British citizenship, visas, refugees and asylum.
  - **Health**, information about rights to health care, the NHS complaints procedure and how much health care costs.
  - **Other**, general advice and information services.
7. As well as providing general advice and information services, WCA also provide the following, as part of ongoing council projects:
  - Financial support to refugees under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation (SVPR) programme
  - Wiltshire Money provides a strategic framework for local organisations to co-ordinate their work, participate in training opportunities, develop collaborative partnerships and share lessons learnt, to help people make informed financial choices and be in control of their money.
  - Carers' project provides Carers with dedicated resources for welfare benefit, debt and money management advice and support.
8. As the current contract expires on 31 March 2025, Commissioners are seeking approval to recommission, procure and implement a new Wiltshire Citizens Advice service for Wiltshire.
9. Commissioning a Wiltshire Citizens Advice service in Wiltshire impacts on council teams, such as Revenues and Benefits, Carers, Housing, Advice & Contact, Education & Skills, Economy & Regeneration and Warm and Safe Wiltshire Service. Without a Citizens Advice service, these council departments would face greater demand from resident enquiries and anecdotal

evidence suggests that these service areas could not meet the current demand for support, without significant additional resources.

10. A key component of the current provider's work is advocacy and research (although this is not currently a commissioned service). Many council service areas rely on the data that WCA produce to manage their service plans and prioritise how best to meet residents' needs. This is evidenced by the monthly dashboard provided by Wiltshire Citizens Advice to stakeholders, which provides a snapshot of Wiltshire residents and their needs.
11. Additionally, ensuring that the council has a strong partnership with a county-wide Citizens Advice group is paramount. For example, the voice of a Citizens Advice group is fundamental for the Economy and Regeneration team in deciding how the UK Shared Prosperity Fund should be spent in Wiltshire.
12. The aim is to commission a Citizens Advice service across the whole of Wiltshire that will deliver the following benefits:
  - Provide a preventative level of support, thereby reducing the need for people to rely on statutory services.
  - Support people to take responsibility for their own wellbeing needs.
  - Supports a strengths-based approach to health and wellbeing.
  - Supports an assets-based approach to how health and social care is delivered in Wiltshire.
  - Supports key council services in carrying out their functions, such as, Housing and Revenues and Benefits

### **Main Considerations for the Council**

13. In January 2024, 49 percent of households in Great Britain reported that their cost of living had increased in the previous month, compared with 52 percent in December 2023. A variety of factors has been driving price rises in Britain, with the inflation rate hitting a high of 11.1% in October 2022<sup>1</sup>.
14. Nationally, the Citizens Advice (CA) helped more people between January-April 2023 than in all of 2019 and most of 2020. In comparison to the same period in 2020 (Jan-April), there has been a 178% increase in people needing to use a food bank, with a substantial number of these people being in work. For the first time, almost 52% of all people who sought support from CA faced a bill deficit, where their income did not cover their basic living expenses<sup>2</sup>.

### Local Evidence

15. At a local level, WCA supported 14,902 clients in 2022/23, which represents 3% of the overall Wiltshire population. 49% of the WCA clients supported were disabled or had a long-term health condition. Most interactions (62%) took place over the phone, with only 5% being in-person.

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<sup>1</sup> D.Clark. Jan 12, 2024, British Adults Reporting a Cost of living increase 2021-2024. [Great Britain cost of living increase 2024 | Statista](#)

<sup>2</sup> Baynes, M.,2023, Citizens Advice helps record number of people with thousands needing foodbanks. <https://news.sky.com/story/citizens-advice-helps-record-number-of-people-with-thousands-needing-foodbanks-12877833>

16. Commissioners researched how Wiltshire's 15 adult social care statistical neighbours commission citizens advice services. All 15 of these local authorities (LAs) commission services through their locality's citizens advice bureau and the average number of clients supported mirrored Wiltshire's figures, namely 3% of the locality's total population.
17. Wiltshire currently funds 30% of WCA's overall income and LAs who funded 30% or less were highlighted for further discussions, as well as those who support the same demographic as Wiltshire through their citizen advice services.
18. The key takeaways from this research were:
- Quarterly Partnership Board to be formed of all the key stakeholders: where referrals can be discussed & to ensure there is no duplication of service;
  - [Use deprivation indicators](#)<sup>3</sup> to stipulate where certain provider offices must be located in the county (i.e.: Trowbridge, Chippenham, Salisbury and Melksham);
  - If funding does not allow for the provider to have offices in these locations, regular pop-up surgeries in these locations should be provided instead;
  - Provider offices to be co-located with Family Hubs and provider to regularly link with Family Hub workers;
  - Contract to be seen as a complementary offer to what provider already does, rather than "propping up" the provider
19. The above bullet points ensure the service will be streamlined, targeted and that those who are in greatest need can more easily access the service. This approach also helps to ensure that the provider does not solely rely on the council to maintain its financial sustainability.
20. In all the conversations Commissioners had with other Local Authorities, the cost-of-living crisis was mentioned heavily. It was stated that more people are needing to rely on Citizens Advice services because of this crisis.
21. This national picture mirrors the situation in Wiltshire, where incomes are no longer supporting the cost of living. Indeed, both colleagues within the council's own housing service and the current service provider have stated that they have not known a situation in their careers where incomes do not stretch to cover basic necessities, such as rent or energy payments.
22. Both national and local data show that there is an overwhelming need for some form of citizens advice type service within Wiltshire.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Engagement**

23. A briefing was be provided for the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Health Select Committee.

## **Safeguarding Implications**

24. Current contract arrangements with the incumbent provider contain robust safeguarding measures in line with Council policy. Contracts give clear direction on how and when to raise a

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<sup>3</sup> Wiltshire Intelligence, 2017, Population & Deprivation  
<https://www.wiltshireintelligence.org.uk/topics/populationanddeprivation/>

safeguarding concern, to avoid any confusion about who will do this and/or assumptions that someone else will raise the concern. Any future contract will also contain these same measures.

### **Public Health Implications**

25. This service will help to provide support to vulnerable and low-income households in Wiltshire. By utilising data from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and council data it identifies where the advice services can be located and targeted where they are most needed.
26. Public Health would support a service such as Wiltshire Citizens Advice that provides early preventative help to Wiltshire residents, supporting their health and wellbeing needs.
27. Not recommissioning early preventative support such as Wiltshire Citizens Advice is likely to result in an increase pressure across the Council, third sector and health services.

### **Procurement Implications**

28. The Procurement will be supported by the Council's Procurement Team.
29. The tender will be conducted under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015), Wiltshire Council's Constitution and relevant Wiltshire Council Policy.
30. A fully open Find a Tender Service (FTS) process will be conducted seeking interest and submissions from interested and capable organisations.
31. We have worked with Procurement and developed a Sourcing Plan which has now been approved and attached at Appendix B.
32. This Service will be procured through a full Find a tender service (FTS) procedure as detailed in the Sourcing Plan at Appendix B.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

33. Should this service not be recommissioned, there is very likely to be a level of unmet demand and the potential requirement for the introduction of a vulnerability cap or referral process to manage demand. With reduced access to timely advice, people's situations could worsen. Impacts will include, poorer health outcomes, increased levels of homelessness, greater demand to Wiltshire Council discretionary funds and services, reduced support for Council Tax Payment, and families needing to choose between funding food or fuel.
34. As this proposal does not represent a change in policy and because the risk rating score on the equalities risk matrix is below three for all areas concerned, an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQiA) is not required for this proposal, however, in the interests of good practice an EQiA has been drafted and is available on request.
35. As part of due diligence, the council carried out extensive engagement with both internal and external stakeholders to understand how the service is used and any impact, should the service be removed. The outcome from this engagement has been used to inform the service requirements and service specification. The findings from this engagement are enclosed at Appendix One.

### **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

36. The tender evaluation criteria and contract terms and conditions will include provision on environmental and climate change impact, to ensure this is appropriately considered. The provider will provide energy efficiency advice including directing to relevant support for flooding and severe weather conditions which is an additional beneficial contribution to Wiltshire Council's aspirations to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral, and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

### **Workforce Implications**

37. If an alternative provider secures the new contract there would be TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 and its amendment in 2014) implications for the current provider but this would be a Contractor-to-Contractor transfer with no direct impact on Wiltshire Council employees, other than those involved in awarding and monitoring the tender process and contract maintenance.

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken**

38. Any savings achieved will likely need to be reinvested in providing additional resources for council teams, in order to meet the increased demand in resident enquiries.
39. Many people choose to access advice & information from WCA because it is a 3rd party & independent from the council. Bringing services in-house may discourage some residents from accessing help & support. Additionally, Commissioning ascertained that none of Wiltshire's 15 Adult Social Care statistical neighbours deliver this service in-house. This is because undertaking of this task and due to the need for residents to be able to access specialist financial advice and information.
40. If the council does not recommission the service, it will be harder to maintain strong partnership working with a Citizens Advice organisation & council teams may no longer be able to access the organisation's research data (the monthly dashboard) or work together as closely in distributing Government funding.
41. Furthermore, should the council decide not to provide an annual uplift to the contract, this may make business unsustainable for the provider, especially in the current financial climate. The result could lead to the provider scaling back some of their services, which will in turn impact upon council services. The incumbent currently spends 80% of their running costs on staffing & the council adheres to a policy of all staff being paid at least the National Living Wage.

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks**

42. Providing an annual uplift creates an additional financial pressure on the council per year, it is also not possible to estimate how much this uplift will cost year-on-year. The uplift is currently set at 1.6% for Core Services which is calculated on the inflation rate.
43. The uplift for the Carers service is estimated to 5.6%, this funding comes from the Better Care Fund and is subject for further inflation rates including the national inflation rate and the care package inflation rate.



44. If the contract is to be for at least five years, it is pragmatic to offer an uplift, especially given the current financial climate. Finance and the budget holders have confirmed in principle that they are willing to provide this annual uplift.

### Financial Implications

Service Element	Cost (2024/25)	Budget Holder
Core Services	£348,500	Adults Commissioning
Carers	£60,210	Adults Commissioning

45. The service will cost a total of £408,710 for 2025/26. The annual uplift is estimated to be around £8,907.89 per annum, meaning that the total cost for the contract (over five years) will be around £2,088,089.45 (if the annual uplift does not exceed 1.6% for Core and 5.6% for Carers). This equates to a spend of £20 per population head over five years, or £4 per population head per year.

46. All budget holders have confirmed they are willing to fund the service for at least the next five years with the uplift methodology as outlined in the section above. This approach has the support of the Head of Finance – Growth, Investment and Place as well as the Director of Commissioning.

### Legal Implications

47. Legal Services has been instructed to prepare the new contract and to advise on TUPE considerations.

48. The proposals will be implemented using a Council template contract which has been tailored to protect the interests of the Council as well as remain commercial so not to put off the market.

49. The procurement will be undertaken in accordance with Constitutional and Legal requirements under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

### Options Considered

#### Option 1: Do not recommission the service.

50. This will put pressure on Council teams, who will require additional resources to manage the increase in resident enquiries. In the short term, savings of £447,617.89 may be achieved, however, any savings achieved will likely need to be reinvested in providing additional resources for council teams.

51. Many people choose to access advice & information from WCA because it is a 3rd party & independent from the council. Bringing services in-house may discourage some residents from accessing help & support. Wiltshire Council will need to acquire Financial Advice Accreditations to provide financial advice and will be unable to bid on Charity funding opportunities which the current provider uses to increase their funding levels. Not recommissioning the service would mean that Wiltshire residents could no longer access support for immigration matters or seek specialist financial and housing advice.

#### Option 2: Recommissioning the service with an annual uplift mechanism.

52. This would mean that residents can access a range of free advice & information from an independent organisation. Residents will be empowered to maintain their own wellbeing, which leads to a resilient society and the council can continue to develop strong partnership working with an organisation that acts as a champion for residents' voices across the county.
53. Alongside this, Council teams would be supported in carrying out their functions (e.g. distributing Government funding) by an organisation that has strong insight into residents' needs.
54. Whilst providing an annual uplift creates an additional financial burden on the council, it is seen as pragmatic in the current financial climate, especially as the incumbent spends 80% of their overall costs on staffing.

#### Option 3: Recommissioning the service with no uplift mechanism

55. Not providing an annual uplift may make business unsustainable for the provider, especially in the current financial climate & this may lead to the provider scaling back some of their services, which will in turn impact upon council services.
56. The incumbent does not currently benefit from an annual uplift and each year commissioners need to agree what elements of the service can be scaled back. This is not seen as a sustainable approach going forward.

#### Option 4

57. If the services are brought in-house a Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE) would apply and all existing staff at Wiltshire Citizens Advice must be offered roles at Wiltshire Council. The cost of staffing is £738,889.92 which is significantly higher than the current amount paid to Wiltshire Citizens Advice putting Wiltshire Council under the contract.
58. Wiltshire Council will also need to acquire Financial Advice Accreditations and will be unable to bid on Charity funding opportunities which the current provider uses to bolster services.

#### Option 5

59. If a hybrid approach is taken, a Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE) would apply to any elements being brought in-house and all existing staff at Wiltshire Citizens Advice on these services must be offered roles at Wiltshire Council. Wiltshire Council do not have a charity status and as such are unable to obtain additional charitable funding which Wiltshire Citizens Advice use to bolster services.

#### Option 6

60. Commissioning the service directly with Wiltshire Citizens Advice with an uplift mechanism will make a difference to the lives of people in Wiltshire by providing access to free, personalised and independent advice, to enable people to find a way forward and successfully deal with life's problems, enable Wiltshire residents to improve their quality of life and wellbeing, support council service areas, such as Housing, Revenues and Benefits, as well as Resettlement and Migration in carrying out their functions and supporting Wiltshire residents to make informed choices.
61. However, a direct award prevents the opportunity for other providers to offer the services and this could create a challenge from residents and other potential providers who seek confirmation that the best provider has been chosen.

## **Conclusions**

62. As outlined above, given the current economic situation there is an overwhelming need for a Citizens Advice type service in Wiltshire. Both national and local data shows the impact that this service has on preventing residents from falling into crisis and supporting them to find a way forward.
63. Additionally, Wiltshire residents rely on support for specialist financial and housing advice. Without a Citizens Advice type service in place, residents would be unable to seek this specialist support.
64. A wide variety of service areas make referrals to the Citizens Advice and council teams are not currently resourced to meet this level of resident demand, should the council decide to no longer commission a citizens advice type service.
65. It is the council's responsibility to ensure that its contracts are sustainable and fair for providers, it is pragmatic to offer an annual uplift and this is why Option 2 has been recommended as the preferred option.

### **Alison Elliott - Director, Commissioning**

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Report Author: Deborah Elliott, Commissioning Manager, Community Services; Jason Jackson-Allen Assistant Commissioner

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Internal Stakeholder Resident Engagement Report

Appendix 2 - Resident Engagement

Appendix 3 - Procurement Sourcing Plan

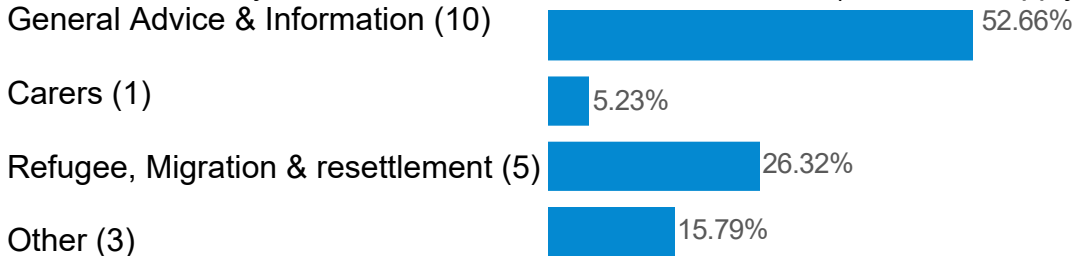
### **Background Papers**

None

## Appendix 1 Internal Stakeholder Engagement report

This report was generated on 11 July 2023. Overall 15 respondents completed this questionnaire.

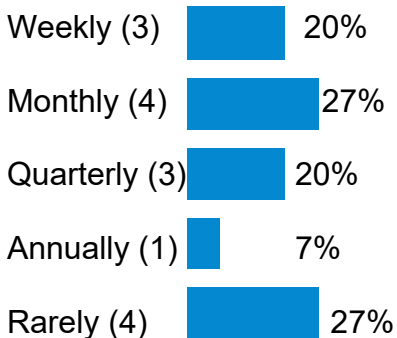
In what areas do you work with Wiltshire Citizens Advice? (tick all that apply)



### Please state other:

- Debt advice, financial inclusion, and food insecurity issues.
- Cost of living impact on communities and dialogue through Wiltshire Money and Wiltshire Faith Communities Network.
- Signposting families for advice around a variety of issues, particularly private family law.

### How often do you engage with Wiltshire Citizens Advice in your role?



### How do Wiltshire Citizens Advice support your service area (tick all that apply)?

- 13% They provide me with population data
- 20% They help distribute government funding on behalf of the council
- 80% They provide advice and information to resident's relevant tm my service (e.g. Benefits, housing, resettlement)
- 33% Other – please state

### Please state other

- Incredibly useful data and insight into the vulnerabilities of communities I work with as an engagement and partnership manager
- CAB deliver briefings, and we signpost our Service Users to them also.
- Support with utilities, debt reduction, budgeting advice. Extended benefits eg: PIP. Indefinite Leave to Remain.
- They issue the arrival voucher to the Ukrainian Guests.
- They were invaluable help during Covid pandemic supporting Wellbeing Hub. One off crisis support.

**What would be the impact on your service area, if the council no longer commissioned a citizens advice service?**

- 33% Highly significant
- 20% Significant
- 33% Somewhat significant
- 13% Minimal impact

**Would you change anything about the current Wiltshire citizens advice service?**

- 53% Yes
- 47% No

**If you said yes above, what would you change about the current Wiltshire citizens advice service**

- More accessible. Keep appointments when they make them.

## Appendix 2 Resident Engagement report

This report was generated on 15/12/23. Overall 62 respondents completed this questionnaire

### Have you accessed Wiltshire Citizens Advice services?



### How many times in the past 5 years have you accessed Wiltshire Citizens Advice services?

- 38% - 1 time
- 17% - 2 times
- 13% - 3 times
- 2% - 4 times
- 31% - 5 or more times

### Was it for the same issue?



### What was the nature of your visit to Wiltshire Citizens Advice? (tick as many as appropriate)

- 81% General Advice & Information (e.g.: benefits, debt, housing issues) (39)
- 25% Other – please state (12)
- 15% Carers (7)
- 2% Refugee, Migration & Resettlement (1)

### Please state other

- Disability claim Employment issues
- Having worked abroad for many years, and receiving a German Pension, I have to have to have proof confirmation that I am still alive. For this reason I need to have it "Stamped" and verified by the Citizens Advice Service, since there are no other official services available, for elderly and infirm people. I am 82, and virtually housebound, and even a trip to the Town Hall is quite difficult.
- Consumer problem
- As a landlord of one property & a current tenant of another with mental health issues & chronic fatigue syndrome & in receipt of PIP I needed advice and was told "we don't help businesses"
- Relationships
- Help with PIP challenging Problem with builders
- NHS ignoring me, what to do advice Trading standards

- Parking fine
- Small claims court

**Did you contact another carer support agency (e.g.: Carer Support Wiltshire) before contacting Wiltshire Citizens Advice about your caring issue?**



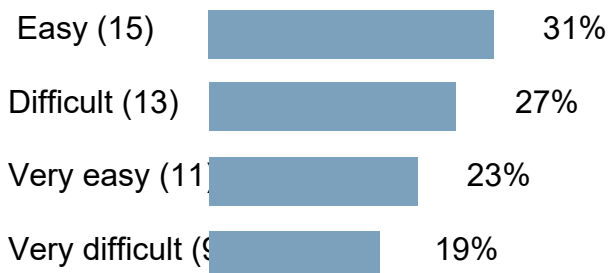
**Why did you contact Wiltshire Citizens Advice about your issue? (tick as many as appropriate)**

- 50% I know the organisation, as they have previously supported me with something (24)
- 38% I was recommended to contact Wiltshire Citizens Advice (18)
- 33% I can access their services easily (16)
- 31% They understand my needs (15)
- 15% Other – please state (7)

**Please specify other**

- I was having no luck with the housing team at Wiltshire council
- As a professional supporting people to get the information they need particularly debt advice See explanation 5
- It was free
- They have a specific carers project
- Citizens advice bureaus are free to use and have an excellent reputation. Had to contact them to make complaint

**How easy is it to access advice & support from Wiltshire Citizens Advice?**



**What would make it easier for you to access advice & support from Wiltshire Citizens Advice? (tick as many as appropriate)**

- 54% Offices located in a community location - e.g. library (26)
- 46% Longer opening hours (including evenings & weekends) (22)
- 42% Less waiting time on the telephone (20)
- 31% Other - please state (free text box for customer to state other reasons) (15)

### **Please specify other**

- More central location
- Not directed to generalised info on web page face to face listening and helping to resolve Issues with right first time support
- Nothing. It is easy enough.
- Not sure, it's easy enough I guess
- Verification of "Still Alive" via UK Pensions Office, who would know when I have died !
- The Option to See a Citizen Advise Adviser in person in Wiltshire, rather than only getting telephone support. Dorset still makes it easy to have face to face meetings
- It is very important to me to speak one to one, with visual contact. I suffer from anxiety and the telephone is impossible to express myself
- I am quite happy with the old system Nothing
- More paid and professionally trained lawyers who can help with legal issues, benefits, well fare, complaints etc
- I kept getting automatically put through to Bath Citizens Advice (apparently because of my 01225 phone number) and they wouldn't help me because Bradford-on-Avon is in Wiltshire not BANES. Sorting that out would be helpful.
- Easier way to get to see someone. Last attempt was on the phone and the options were very limited, in the end I gave up.
- More hours in my town, we are as big as other towns yet still one day per week. Also, online booking for that day please. Hard for carers to arrive and not wait hoysrs
- Chat online
- The carers project has been really helpful, it makes access easier if this continues

### **Is there anything you would change about the current Wiltshire Citizens Advice Service?**

Yes (23)  52%

No (23)  48%

### **What would you change?**

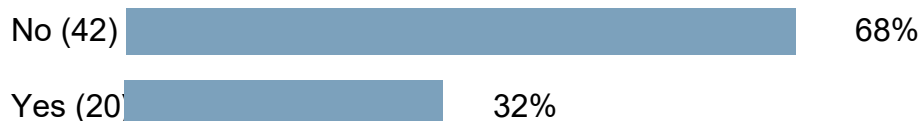
- Can't get in touch with them now
- More central location with access to quiet spaces. The leisure centre is good as community hub but very noisy with appts right next to swimming pool and busy reception area
- Go back to face-to-face
- Make them answer the phone more quickly Face to face empathy
- more visible and accessible
- They offer an excellent service for a great number of people especially those who are vulnerable and in need. However, they need more staff and funding not just on those ringing in but for those who need face to face help.
- Don't know where they are. When I went to the office I was recommended to someone from another organisation told me they had closed and use the internet.
- What would you change?
- Have drop in sessions not only telephone access. Face to face appointments. And drop in again
- I was unable to have a face to face appointment with an adviser so my issue is still unresolved. I realise that demand is high and funding tight but I was v disappointed. I would have been prepared to wait for an appointment or have a video consultation but



was not offered these options. I am IT savvy but the website was very unwieldy.

- More compassionate advisors - they refused to help me until I started crying. The current situation of no contact on a one to one basis
- Being more accessible and shorter waiting times
- actually seeing someone for the help needed, also help for people that are house bound
- Make it professional, well paid and trained, compassionate teams working for local communities The routine of 01225 numbers to the Bath service. See above.
- Drop in
- Revert back to old drop in center system
- Melksham Venue - not really disabled friendly, sit and wait is horrible, too many people for the am time slot so they limit your time
- I have to get in contact with them, firstly
- More face to face hubs for people who cannot get to Devizes. It's only recently that a bus route enabled people from Pewsey to get there
- Text and chat service Make it face to face
- As above, a chance to meet face to face

### Would you contact Wiltshire Council instead of Wiltshire Citizens Advice about your issue?



### Please explain why you would not contact Wiltshire Council.

- Waste of time not helpful with anything and very rude if you phone them they couldn't care less
- I don't trust them to be independent
- Advice services NEED to be independent of Local authority and government bodies.
- Current waiting times for anything are too long. You are not independent and don't have the knowledge CAB does.
- Don't trust you lot
- I did not know that i could work for Wiltshire council
- It could involve a challenge to the Council or to Government agencies I would automatically think to contact Citizens Advice
- See 7a
- It depends what the issue is.
- I trust cita - dont think the council could help me
- They would not be expected to provide the type of service that used to be given Citizens advice Because Citizens Advice seeks more approachable
- experience of the council is less caring, disinterested, defensive, blame-shaming, closing down conversations, essentially unsafe. CAB is more inclusive, engaging, welcoming and aboveall INDEPENDENT

- I trust CA to get back to me in a timely manner, they also have a wealth of knowledge due to the various occupations of their volunteers/advisors.
- Don't think I would find staff who could help
- Takes too long to get through to the correct department Not appropriate
- It depends on my issue. If I disagree with what Wiltshire Council has told me I would want to seek independent advice.
- Not relevant to my query
- Citizen Advice Advisers are renowned for being better qualified to give advice rather than well-meaning Wiltshire Council officials
- My personal experience with staff at Chippenham Council has been very bad, they were condescending and provocative
- I feel that volunteers really want to help You won't have their knowledge
- I get impartial advice from CAB not from WC
- Sounds like they all work from home and can't speak to anyone difficulty getting through to right department
- The Council were not the best agency for the issue I had. I would pick the most appropriate service to contact depending on what I need help with
- Not specific
- Customer advisors are a bunch of not-qualified staff that only takes messages, gather info, but can't really advise and does not want to help. Housing people, again very cruel, short and rude with people. Social services, non-existing. No resources to help anyone, isolated, sick emigrant communities etc.
- It wasn't Council-related.
- CAB help me, they tell me about my rights and options, the Council don't
- Not independent, do not trust due to previous misinformation given to partner at old Bradley Road Bldg. Can't talk to anyone there re most adult services
- It was about employment rights Too difficult
- No suitable service available Citizens Advice more approachable
- They do not always have an answer

### **Any other comments**

- I always promote Citizens Advice as an organisation to advise in a comprehensive manner. Citizens Advice are a vital service which is very important to the community.
- CAB is a long-standing and trusted brand. I would not want to deal with Council instead. Vital to support an independent advice service
- I'm completing this as someone who works for a local charity and uses the WCA in that capacity. Please keep funding WCA as they provide an excellent advice and do so much

good work but it's difficult to get through as their phone lines are so busy. My understanding is that only 10% of callers get through. With the current economic climate, increase in debt, cost of living crisis etc, Wiltshire needs an effective CA service.

- Last question. Depends what the issue is.
- The hubris of the Council to think it could do the work of CAB no doubt to save money. Shameful and excluding for the most vulnerable in our communities
- Please do not take away this valuable service, we need it here in Wiltshire x No
- no
- If I'm right the service was first funded in 1939. They are bound to have a wealth of specialised knowledge rather than signposting.
- Citizens advice have been a valuable source of help and support to me and my friends/family Their internet service is likewise very helpful
- I was unaware there was such a thing as the Wiltshire Citizens Advice Service, perhaps it should be advertised more to make people aware of it.
- Having better equipped and professionally trained and paid Cab would help with lots of issues that Wiltshire Council should be helping, but they just push people away.
- Looking for integration of freshly moved EU citizens
- Citizens advice were kind compassionate knowledgeable and really helped me .they are a great resource that many just cannot access due to location or waiting times.

## Check List

Please review items on check list and complete response box and where appropriate include in plan above.

Check Item	Action Required	Response
Social Value	Social Value needs to be considered.	Social Value will be detailed throughout the specification and Ts&Cs and the evaluation criteria will ask how bidders will improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Wiltshire.
Equalities Impact Assessment	Is an impact assessment necessary, in most cases this will be a requirement the Service is responsible for carrying this out.	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed.
Legal Support Required	Legal support requirement should be considered and agreed with the client.	Legal support requested to support tender activities for terms and conditions
Local Business	Ensure plan has addressed supporting Local Business.	The tender will include consideration for local business in delivering future services.
TUPE/Pension Staff Transfers	Ascertain if there is any possibility of staff transfers. If TUPE or Pensions may be involved discuss with Legal Services	If the incumbent provider is not successful in the new tender then TUPE would apply
Environment	Are there environmental issues or implications in this contract?	Not Applicable
Business Continuity	Business continuity issues - this does not just mean IT but consideration of providing essential services.	Continuity of services will be included within the tender project's risk and contingencies log.

Financial Risk	<p>What is the financial risk associated with this contract</p> <p>-</p> <p><b>Supplier Risk:</b> how much assessment of the supply base is necessary, what is the risk if a supplier fails. If the tender is above OJEU value we should carry out financial assessments as necessary.</p> <p><b>Budget Risk:</b></p>	<p>The winning bidder will be subject to a Due Diligence check, that will identify any risks in their providers financial standing. We will also be asking bidders (as standard) to complete the Supplier Questionnaire which asks certain questions relating to their finances. We will be able, as part of the tender process, to ask clarification questions relating to their finances.</p>
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	Is the budget confirmed for the duration of the contract?	
Collaboration/ Access to contract	Will this contract be shared with others, if so how is procurement being undertaken?	Not applicable
Authority to Award	Has the Responsible Officer ensured that the correct authority will be in place when contract needs to be awarded?	A report will be going to Cabinet to seek delegated authority to award a new contract and all associated documents to the Interim Director of Commissioning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Control and Strategic Planning.
Ordering and Payment	Confirm as part of tender process how contract will be paid for and what GL and Cost Code charges will be made to.	Contract will be paid in arrears, once the provider has met any conditions specified in the contract

The contents of this report should remain confidential until approved by CLT and the Cabinet for publication.

RACI Template (The template below is an example only please draw up template to suit your project)

Team Member	Responsible Officer	Procurement Officer	Service Director	Other	etc
Draft Procurement Plan	A/R	C	C	I	
Specification	R	A	R	I	
Tender using Procontract	C	R	I	I	
Evaluation	C	A/R	I	I	

RACI	Definition
Responsible	The role or roles who actually carry out the action
Accountable	The role who is responsible for ensuring the action takes place (can only be one)
Consulted	Roles that will be consulted about the task (views need to be considered)
Informed	Roles that will be informed (no decision making or influencing role)