



Citizens Advice Oxfordshire Report on Year 25/26 for Abingdon Town Council Up to 22nd March 2026

1. Introduction to Citizens Advice Oxfordshire

We are an independent local charity providing free, confidential and impartial advice on a wide range of issues such as debt, benefits, housing and employment to over 20,000 people each year. We serve the communities of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. We aim to deliver a full Citizens Advice Service from the main towns in the two Districts including **Abingdon Town Centre**.

At our core, we believe no one should have to face daunting or complex challenges alone. By providing high-quality, independent guidance, we equip individuals with the knowledge and confidence to find a way forward. Our service is inclusive and open to all.

We serve as a vital lifeline for the most vulnerable; compared to district averages, our clients are more likely to be from White British backgrounds, living with long-term health conditions or disabilities, or facing financial hardship and housing instability. As the frontline response to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, we remain accessible Monday to Friday, 9:30 am – 4:30 pm, via telephone, webchat, email, and in-person appointments.

Our service is powered by the dedication of local volunteers who represent the very communities they serve. Their passion and expertise form the backbone of our charity, ensuring we can meet the evolving needs of our neighbours.

We have **250** active volunteers supported by 85 paid staff.

Merger into Citizens Advice Oxfordshire

From **1st April 2025**, Oxfordshire South & Vale Citizens Advice merged with Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire and Citizens Advice Oxford to become **Citizens Advice Oxfordshire**. We will be maintaining **all current client services**, while exploring new and innovative ways of reaching those most in need.

We believe that working together will ensure greater sustainability of our respective organisations, so we can continue to provide vital services to the communities we serve.

As a valued supporter of our work, we wanted to assure Abingdon Town Council that our commitment to delivering an exceptional, quality service to the community of Abingdon remains steadfast and we firmly believe this merger will enable us to leverage our combined resources, expertise, and capabilities to better serve our clients.

2. Abingdon Advice Centre in 25/26

While we saw fewer individual clients this past year, the work itself has become much more intense. We've noticed a clear trend: clients aren't just coming in with one quick question anymore. Instead, they are arriving with complex, overlapping issues—often bringing three or four different enquiries to a single session.

Client Numbers seen*	2024/25	2025/26
	(12 months)	(11 months)
Citizens Advice Oxfordshire	N/A	17,248
Vale of the White Horse	4,581	2,296
Unique Abingdon residents by ward (clients may visit several times):		
Caldecott	296	240
Northcourt	213	181
Peachcroft	141	129
Fitzharris	162	150
Dunmore	119	126
Total Abingdon residents	931	826
No. of total Abingdon residents' issues addressed	3,771	2,745
No. of resulting actions by advisers	4,552	3,653

* These numbers are based on a unique *monthly* client count. This counts the number of unique clients we advise each month and the monthly totals are added together to give the annual total. This is a better measure of workload. A unique *annual* client count counts the number of unique clients in a year. This latter figure will be smaller because a significant number of our clients come to us more than once in a year.

** Abingdon Citizens Advice serves people from elsewhere in the Vale and non-residents who work in Abingdon. Hence its client numbers are greater than the number of Abingdon residents served.

Clients in Abingdon can contact us by a variety of channels. All contact can be broken down as follows:

- 27% in person
- 33% via email
- 25% phone
- 11% Adviceline phone
- 1.3% other (letter, video call, web chat)

The most frequent **issues** raised by clients in Abingdon Wards in 25/26 were:

All issues:

Issues		
	Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	671	262
Benefits Universal Credit	239	116
Charitable Support & Food Ban..	175	94
Consumer goods & services	101	56
Debt	388	109
Education	12	11
Employment	144	85
Financial services & capability	86	66
GVA & Hate Crime	13	10
Health & community care	45	28
Housing	311	170
Immigration & asylum	96	53
Legal	81	56
Other	10	10
Relationships & family	168	105
Tax	52	36
Travel & transport	56	39
Utilities & communications	97	46
Grand Total	2,745	

Top Benefits Issues:

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

Top Debt Issues:

- Council Tax Arrears
- Debt Assessment
- Other Debt

Financial Outcomes:

At time of writing, in Abingdon Wards alone Citizens Advice facilitated **£347,152** in financial outcomes for Abingdon clients. This breaks down as follows:

Outcomes

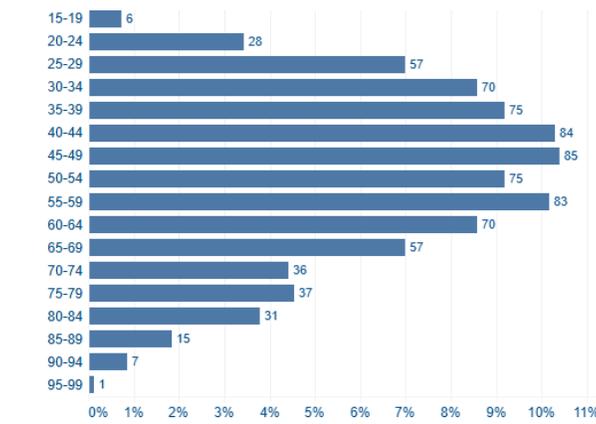
Income gain	£205,960
Re-imbursments, services, loans	£5,089
Debts written off	£21,394
Repayments rescheduled	£62,104
Other	£52,607

This is practical, measurable, real support for those most in need in our community but we must do more to support those in a 'negative budget' and continue to alleviate hardship. We have grown our Debt team over the last 12 months and this will continue to be expanded. We hope this demonstrates the value for money for the investment that Abingdon Town Council makes in the Citizens Advice service each year.

3. About our clients in Abingdon

- 59% are women, 41% men
- 78% are White British, 4% White Other, 10% Black, 10% Asian, 3% Mixed race, 4% Other

Number of Abingdon clients by age range 25/26



While quantitative data is vital, it cannot fully encapsulate the lived experiences of those we serve. Many clients come to us facing housing or employment instability; by empowering them to navigate these crises, we facilitate long-term stability for them and their families. These transformations are reflected in the following testimonials from our Abingdon branch:

"The service you give is amazing - so grateful for the help. My case is ongoing so it's not completely settled yet."

"Brilliant, kind, caring, helpful. Taking time with me and did everything I needed. THANK YOU"

"Explained everything. Directed me to the right places. The advised 'A' was very understanding. Thank you."

"A.....very helpful. It's so nice to be listened to.."

"Thank you so much for the wonderful advice. It was extremely helpful and given with such kindness, which meant a lot to me. Having that level of support when I needed it most was invaluable. I'm very grateful!"

The CAB gives a valued service and meets a variety of needs. It is an essential national help service to be cherished.

4. In conclusion

Citizens Advice Oxfordshire is a cornerstone of our community, empowering vulnerable residents to navigate complex challenges while directly reducing hardship. By providing expert early intervention, we prevent minor issues from spiralling into costly crises, significantly easing the operational burden on local government and partner charities.

On behalf of Citizens Advice Oxfordshire, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Abingdon Town Council for your steadfast partnership over the years. We look forward to your continued support as we transition to our work as Citizens Advice Oxfordshire.

Joseph Mailler, Advice Services Manager, Citizens Advice Oxfordshire