

Report to Felixstowe Town Council

Financial Year 2023-24



Background

The last financial year has seen a high demand for advice and an increase in the complexity of cases we are seeing. In 2023/4 Citizens Advice east Suffolk (CAES) advised 8,425 clients with over 40,000 issues, producing outcomes of over £4.5m for our clients.

The difficult financial environment has impacted our clients and we have made an effort to expand our services as much as our resources allow so that we can meet client need and be more accessible. Increased costs have increased our overheads and we are grateful for the continued support of Felixstowe Town Council.

Felixstowe

Our office is open 5 days a week and clients are able to access advice via email, phone and by visiting our offices where we run an appointment service, although if we have capacity or a case is urgent, we see clients when they drop in. In addition to our main office, we have opened an outreach at The Oaks Family Hub in order to be on site and accessible to residents in the area.

We have participated in a number of local events (Be Well bus, Felixstowe Peninsula Community Partnership, Pensioners Information Fair, Felixstowe Wellbeing Hub to name a few) and work closely with the DWP to support clients but also to provide work experience.

During the year we have supported 911 Felixstowe residents with 3,487 issues. This was a 27% increase in client numbers with 18% of the clients seen face to face. Financial outcomes totalling more than £188K were achieved for clients; this includes over £41k of debt being written off.

The main issues we have advised on have related to benefits and Universal Credit (help with completing Personal Independence Payment forms is a large part of our work), housing, charitable support (reflecting the difficult financial circumstances people are experiencing), debt and family. Looking forward we expect these to remain the dominant areas of advice.

Our Felixstowe office is an important part of CAES and we look forward to continue working closely with the community in Felixstowe.

Chiara Saunders
Chief Executive
Citizens Advice east Suffolk