Uttesford Citizens Advice Bureau
Annual Report
2013–14

www.uttlesfordcab.org.uk
In this year’s audit our staff and volunteers were judged to be in the top performing 8% of bureaux nationally for advice.

We implemented a new client management system – whilst keeping the doors open for clients!

We introduced a new phone system to reduce customer call charges.

We increased outreach services at Carver Barracks and Stansted.

“Every person in Uttlesford Citizens Advice Bureau is here for the same reason: we want to help change people’s lives for the better and make society fairer.”

Kate Robson – District Manager
Uttlesford Citizens Advice Bureau is an independent charity run by local people, which can quickly tailor services to local needs. However, as part of a national body it benefits from access to an extensive and up-to-date library of advice and training resources, external quality assurance and the use of a brand that is synonymous with confidential, free and impartial advice.

In order to combat the transport challenges in the district, we offer disability benefit home-visits and have increased our outreach services whilst greatly improving our phone coverage. We moved quickly to prepare for the introduction of Universal Credits with the introduction of the new Money Doctor service in October. We were also delighted to have finally achieved our aim to open five days a week. We also work with local trusts to offer less traditional ‘crisis’ support to people in urgent financial need because, simply, this is needed, and if we don’t, who does?

We are always aware that funding comes from the District Council, local town and parish councils and we can only thank them for valuing the work we do within the district.

“It now feels like I’m taking some action on my problems rather than letting them get me down.”

Great Dunmow client

ROBIN MOSER
CHAIRMAN, UTTLESFORD CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
What we do

Student rental angst
A young student, after leaving rented accommodation in the summer, was told that he would not get his rent deposit back because the house needed to be professionally cleaned. Having spoken to the client, it became clear that the house was in a poor condition when it was rented and that he had made all reasonable attempts to clean the house prior to leaving. The client was assisted in contacting his landlord and letting agent and was supported in making the case that he wasn’t responsible for the mess. The client got his deposit returned and was given advice on how to protect himself from issues of this sort in the future.

Life is unpredictable
A policeman running a household with two children was struck down with a long-term medical condition and within a short period was medically retired. Financial commitments, feasible on a full salary, became quickly unsupportable and with repayments becoming unmanageable, the threat of losing the family home became a real danger. We helped him negotiate realistic repayment terms and worked on helping the family to budget within the income available. The family are adjusting to their new circumstances and have remained in their home.

Taking advantage
A professional single mum was under a great deal of stress because her employer was stating that her role would be in jeopardy unless she was able to travel large distances, which included over-night and weekend work. Although she accepted that this was needed, with travelling time she was regularly working a 70 hours a week, with no overtime. When she told her employer that her health was being affected, she was immediately suspended and sent for a medical, despite never having missed a day of work before. We provided the client with information regarding her rights and guidance on her options.

Please note: Some details on these pages have been changed to protect client confidentiality.
A knock at the door
During the ‘Beat the Cold’ campaign in February, CAB advisers knocked on Mr B’s door. He explained that his Motability car had been taken away and phone cut because he was struggling financially; the Department of Works and Pensions had decided that he was no longer eligible for a disability benefit. He was devastated because on top of his problems his wife had just been diagnosed with MS. A home visit was arranged and the case was reviewed – we felt that a poor decision had been made by the DWP and helped the client appeal. The client had his benefit re-instated and upgraded and is now awaiting the delivery of a replacement Motability car. He is now recorded as a priority user to make sure that his phone will not be cut again.

Email for help
A young man contacted us in a desperate state. He was agoraphobic and had sent us an email. His phone had been cut because of debt problems and he had no food left in the house. We arranged for a food parcel to be delivered and helped him to claim for an Essential Living Fund grant to deal with other emergency living expenses. We signposted him to West Essex Mind and encouraged him to contact his doctor.
Introducing Uttlesford Frontline
In a rural district, local support services are often fragmented and concentrated in more populated areas. Numbers of people needing specific services may also be small and it is sometimes challenging for frontline workers to know all the possible options.

Uttlesford CAB, with a number of other advice providers, was awarded a Big Lottery grant to develop a web-based referral system to help frontline workers ensure that people are getting access to all the support and help that is available in the district. The system will start to be rolled out in January 2014.

Launching CAB Money Doctor
We live in a beautiful and desirable part of the country, but the cost of living in this area is expensive. If you are struggling to balance your household budget, until recently, there was nowhere to get support. A two year grant was awarded by Uttlesford District Council in April 2013 to train six new Money Advisers, and a service was launched in October to offer help with income maximisation, budgeting, saving techniques, switching utilities, managing credit and lots more. Appointments are available in Saffron Walden from Tuesday to Fridays.

Working together to improve advice services
A Big Lottery grant has helped us work more closely with other organisations to improve services in the district. Age UK will be using our offices in Saffron Walden to deliver a befriending service; SEPT Macmillan Cancer Information and Support will use our offices in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow to offer appointments and Royal Deaf will use our offices to offer British Sign Language translation and legal advice, via video conferencing, to the Deaf in our community. We are also working more closely with the District’s Housing Department and Benefit Department to ensure that people affected by recent benefit and housing legislation changes are given as much support as possible.

Reaching out to Young People
In December we ran a youth CAB awareness competition with the support of Saffron Screen and RWD Magazine (the largest on-line youth mag in the UK). Our winners produced a video and poster that are now being used across the district to ensure that younger people know that the CAB is for them too!
“The CAB has provided me with invaluable help. I have mental health issues and I don’t know what I’d do without this service.”

Great Dunmow client

The CAB team

**PAID STAFF**
- **Kate Robson** Manager
- **Sarah Philbrook** Advice Services Manager
- **Kellie Dorrington** Senior Session Supervisor
- **Lyndie Taylor** Disability Benefits Specialist
- **Pebble Padfield** Session Supervisor
- **Katy Rolph** Session Supervisor
- **Gill Laws** Trainee Debt Caseworker
- **Lizz Hunt** Trainee Debt Caseworker
- **Joanna Hancock** Office Admin
- **Jo Snares** Cleaning

**Trustee Board**
- **Robin Moser** Chair
- **Nicola Robert** Vice Chair
- **John Clayton** Company Secretary & Health and Safety Chair
- **Roger Turner** Treasurer
- **Diane Drury** Fundraising Chair
- **Jill Elms** Personnel Chair
- **Emma Langbridge** External Affairs Chair
- **David O’Brien** Trustee
- **John Starr** Trustee
- **Tricia Summers** Trustee

**Other members of the team**
- **Jane Chetcuti** EAC Committee
- **Nicola Kearton** EAC Committee
- **Robin Mitchell** Social Policy Assistant
- **Sean Dunwoody** Social Media

Uttlesford CAB has 10 part-time members of staff and 80 volunteers.

**Advisers**
- Dodie Brooks
- Sarah Brock
- Peter Clarke
- Christine Crookes
- Eileen Duck
- Zofia Everett
- Peter Gould
- Julie Haines
- Judith Hasler
- Rosalind Hemby
- Peter Janke
- Jackie Kingdom
- Helen Kirkham
- Margaret Legg
- Steven Mitchell
- Sally Moser
- Frances Murray
- Helen Rayner
- Eve Roberts
- David Rowland
- Lesley Sibson
- Ann Smith
- Susan Smith
- Judy Thomson
- Nigel Varnam
- Michele Wacey
- Ann Wade
- Michael Watts
- Barbara Wilcox

**Trainee Advisers and Assessors**
- Charlotte Chambers
- Jane Davies
- Marta De Bruijn
- Catherine Essery
- John French
- Julie Bruce-Smith
- Xia (Dana) He
- Philippa Hopewell
- Anne Hopkins
- Victoria Sharpe
- Joanne Stone
- Jane Thirskettle
- Delyth Williams

**Disability Benefit Team**
- Patricia Awbery-Maskell
- June Baker
- Sue Kinmonth
- Roy Lowe
- Lorna Manser
- Catherine Smith
- Fiona Symonds
- Ginny Eley
- Jane Berney

**Gateway Assessors**
- Sean O’Sullivan
- Carol Clarke
- Liz Criley
- Sian Dorrington
- Janet Elsey
- Susan Griffith
- Jane Morley
- Jane Morris
- Chris Phillips
- Fiona Symonds
- Tricia Wilby
Our Bureau would not exist without the dedication of our volunteers and paid staff: to them we owe our deepest gratitude.

If you want to support the work of CAB perhaps you could: host a fundraiser, help with a street collection, write to an MP about a campaign we are supporting, become a volunteer or make a commitment to donate?

Please visit www.uttlesfordcab.org.uk

Thank you to everyone who provided personal donations and supported our fundraising efforts in 2012-13, from playing Bridge, to visiting Sworders Auction rooms, to making cakes!

We would also like to thank the local organisations who support our work and help our clients:
- Saffron Walden United Charities
- Gibson Trust
- Alexia Wilson Trust
- Tees Solicitors
- Taylor Vinters Solicitors
- Heckford Norton Solicitors
- Adams Harrison
- Foort Tayler Solicitors
- PDJ Law
- Saffron Screen
- RWD Magazine

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This report has been designed by: www.design-mill.co.uk
Telephone 01799 540173

With thanks to ...

Our thanks to our funders in 2012-13:
- Uttlesford District Council
- Saffron Walden Town Council
- Essex County Council
- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Great Dunmow Town Council
- Many of Uttlesford’s parish councils
- Hastoe Housing
- Department of Business Information and Skills
  (New phone equipment)
- Department of Health (Warm Homes, Healthy People – Door knocking funding)
- Waitrose
- Probus
- Rotary Club

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