

Case study: Citizens Advice Wakefield District

August 2021

Citizens Advice Wakefield District (CAWD) is a charity providing confidential advice to people across a wide range of issues including benefits, debt, pensions and health.

CAWD received £33,815 through the Coronavirus Community Support Fund (CCSF). The CCSF is a funding programme supported by a grant of £200 million from Government, distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund, to help organisations in England respond to the COVID-19 crisis and increase community support to people affected by the pandemic.

How was the CCSF grant used?

During COVID-19, CAWD could not operate its usual face-to-face service in central Wakefield. Staff shifted to remote working, delivering support via phone, email and web-chat. In this way, CAWD continued to support many people remotely.

CAWD were concerned about meeting increased demand from people affected by the pandemic, and who may not have used their services before. Prior to the pandemic, most new customers would have been seen through outreach or face-to-face services. CAWD needed a new way to identify and start supporting these people.

In July 2020, CAWD applied for CCSF funding to address this growing need through a new 'Help in the Hubs' service, working in partnership with four local community centres in areas particularly affected by the economic effects of the pandemic. CAWD used some of the CCSF grant to rent rooms from the community centres to deliver the service, which supplemented income shortfalls for the centres themselves and in some cases enabled them to keep staff employed.

CAWD also used the CCSF grant to recruit and employ a qualified outreach adviser to provide face-to-face advice in each Hub one day per week. When social distancing restrictions tightened, advisers delivered support remotely with staff at the Hubs supporting people with technology if necessary.



After the first lockdown we were thinking about the accessibility of our services and developed the idea with the managers of the community hubs. [The CCSF] helped back up the project.” – Grantholder

Quick facts:

Grant period: **July 2020-January 2021**

4 community hub partners

70 new people supported

£80,000+ increased income for those supported, such as through Personal Independence Payments

Three key messages:

- ① Working directly in local communities was key to enabling a wider group of people to access CAWD's service.
- ② Existing trusted relationships between staff at the community centres and communities helped keep people engaged with the service once lockdown restrictions tightened.
- ③ CAWD's expert advice supported people to manage their financial situation – for example, one community hub saw decreased requests for food support following the introduction of the Help in the Hub service.

Funded by



In partnership with

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
COMMUNITY FUND

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What difference did the CCSF grant make?

For people and communities

Many local people were severely affected by the economic effects of the pandemic, with growing need for advice and support relating to debt, redundancy and benefits. CAWD's confidential service supported people to respond to these challenges.

Through 'Help in the Hubs', CAWD was able to reach people who might not have otherwise accessed the service. People accessing food banks at the Hubs were signposted to the service, to help address the underlying issues behind this.

The Hubs remained open even when restrictions tightened and CAWD outreach advisers could not deliver the service face-to-face. Staff at the Hubs continued to signpost people to CAWD and in some cases provided access to technology to enable them get in touch with the outreach adviser.

Advice from CAWD enabled people to increase their income and to access other services. Addressing their financial worries also contributed to improvements in their wellbeing.



We empower people by giving them the knowledge to help themselves. It's a confidence builder for a lot of people because they didn't realise what they were capable of.

– Staff member

For the organisation and its staff

The CCSF funding supported CAWD to deliver services directly in local communities. Working in partnership with the Hubs, CAWD was able to support people who might not have otherwise been aware of or able to access its services.

By delivering work in a familiar community setting and building on the trusted relationships staff at the community hubs had with the people they support, CAWD was able to embed itself in local

Key legacy from the CCSF:

The CCSF grant supported CAWD to demonstrate the effectiveness of delivering advice in local community centres to local commissioners. This has enabled CAWD to leverage additional funding from the council to support existing Hubs and launch six further Hubs.

communities. This helped overcome people's anxieties around travelling to access the service and was particularly important because many people were accessing the service for the first time.

CAWD outreach advisers worked closely with staff at the community centre. They said they were part of the team at the Hubs.



Referrals from the front line meant people were supported both with the immediate problem and then us fixing the bigger underlying problems.

– Staff member

For delivery partners

CAWD worked with four community centres in the local area to deliver activities supported through their grant. These Hubs were already supporting their communities with food because people were affected by the economic effects of the pandemic.

Working with CAWD enabled Hubs to provide "wraparound support", identifying people who might need advice and signposting them to the outreach adviser. Recognition of the Citizens Advice brand helped build people's trust in the service.

The partnership also supported collaboration between the Hubs and made it easier to share learning during the changing circumstances. This collaboration has helped change the way the local authority is approaching services in the area.



The funding allowed us to keep the building open by keeping a member of staff on when other volunteers were shielding. We would not have had Citizens Advice working with us in the way they have without the funding.

– Community Hub leader

Want to know more?

Website: <https://wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/wakefieldcab>