

## Rent Support Assessment Process

<b>Date of rent support assessment:</b>	13.9.23
<b>Carried out by:</b>	Peter Woodley, Richard Gibson, Avril Corbin, Helen Down
<b>Name of Applicant:</b>	North & West Gloucestershire Citizens Advice
<b>Is the applicant a legally constituted, not-for-profit voluntary and community sector organisation?</b>	Registered charity number 104476 and company number 2993822
<b>Name /address of property</b>	Room B13 and B14, Municipal Offices Promenade Cheltenham GL50 9SA

<b>Rent Support outcomes</b>	<b>Submission</b>	<b>Proposed score against the sub-elements (up to a maximum of 20% per outcome)</b>
<p><b>Cheltenham's environmental quality and heritage is protected, maintained and enhanced.</b></p> <p>This could include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting bio-diversity</li> <li>• Responding to climate change</li> <li>• Promoting sustainable living</li> <li>• Protecting and enhancing parks, gardens and open spaces</li> <li>• Protecting and enhancing the built environment</li> </ul>	<p>The organisation highlighted that their fully trained volunteers provide the advice people need for the problems they face. Some just require information about their rights whilst others need Citizens Advice to look at options and sometimes take action on their behalf. In all cases the impact is to promote sustainable living conditions for our clients whether by assisting in debt problems, benefit issues, employment disputes, housing matters, financial and legal difficulties or relationship conflicts.</p> <p>Citizens Advice works to address fuel poverty and advised nearly 850 in the last financial year. Advice ranges from making sure clients are on the correct tariff, to helping with priority services, advising on energy efficiency and securing grants to improve the energy efficiency of people's homes. Activities include: providing advice on fuel options, tariffs, energy grants, energy efficiency and reducing bills. There are also health related services that provide vulnerable people with support to warm their houses. Training is provided to paid members of staff and volunteers on energy efficiency enabling them to support their clients better.</p>	<p><b>Promoting bio-diversity</b></p> <p><b>Responding to climate change – 4%</b></p> <p><b>Promoting sustainable living – 4%</b></p> <p><b>Protecting and enhancing parks, gardens and open spaces</b></p> <p><b>Protecting and enhancing the built environment – 4%</b></p> <p><b><u>The recommended rent subsidy for this element is 12%.</u></b></p>

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	<p>In addition, the organisation is aware of its impact on the environment as an organisation. It is moving towards a paperless office, making purchasing decisions for equipment to be as sustainable as possible and ensures recycling in all offices. As part of its Environmental policy, the organisation offers hybrid working to reduce travel miles by staff and where possible mileage for business purposes is reduced.</p>	
<p><b>Sustain and grow Cheltenham’s economic and cultural vitality.</b> This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping people into employment</li> <li>• Helping businesses to get established</li> <li>• Supporting cultural activity</li> <li>• Providing advice and information</li> <li>• Supporting tourist activities</li> </ul>	<p>Citizens Advice has shown that the Advice Service supports Cheltenham’s economic and cultural vitality in numerous ways. As an organisation it helps with welfare benefits, debt, housing, consumer and employment issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2022/23 Citizens Advice provided advice and information to 3,559 of residents of Cheltenham with over 8,619 enquiries. That advice is face to face, by telephone and in writing. Advice is provided on all issues, ranging from consumer to debt, housing to employment, relationships and welfare benefits.</li> <li>• Financial outcomes for clients of £1.4 million were achieved, including nearly £800,000 in additional income through additional benefit income</li> <li>• National Citizens Advice data shows for every £1 invested, £26.35 of financial outcomes for the people supported is achieved.</li> <li>• The organisation supports people in employment by advising over 401 people regarding their rights at work, pay and conditions, etc. 42% said their employment was now more secure following advice.</li> <li>• The organisation employs 48 staff and has 55 volunteers. Volunteers report that they have gained new skills, increased their confidence, improved their wellbeing and some have gained work as a result.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Helping people into employment – 4%</b> <b>Helping businesses to get established – 4%</b> <b>Supporting cultural activity</b> <b>Providing advice and information – 8%</b> <b>Supporting tourist activities</b></p> <p><b><u>The recommended rent subsidy for this element is 16%, due to the significant level of advice and information provided to residents.</u></b></p>
<p><b>People live in strong and safe communities.</b> This could include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling local residents to meet</li> </ul>	<p>The organisation currently provides volunteering opportunities to 55 people to volunteer and is continually recruiting volunteers. The volunteer team is vital to service delivery and volunteers undertake a variety of roles. Many volunteers are retired or</p>	<p><b>Enabling local residents to meet together and socialise</b> <b>Engaging residents in positive social networks – 4%</b></p>

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<p>together and socialise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging residents in positive social networks</li> <li>• Enabling local residents to contribute their time and efforts into community activity</li> <li>• Enabling local residents to feel safer in their communities</li> <li>• A place for young people to meet and feel safe</li> </ul>	<p>gaining experience whilst looking for employment.</p> <p>This volunteering has the following impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 69% report feeling not engaged with their community before volunteering but after volunteering 90% of people feel engaged with their community</li> <li>✓ Over 80% of volunteers report feeling more equipped and empowered to get on with their lives since volunteering</li> <li>✓ Nearly 80% increased confidence since volunteering (Value of CAB volunteering research)</li> <li>✓ Each week CAB volunteers donate over 300 hours per week, representing an in-kind value of £213,096 annually.</li> </ul> <p>The volunteers, all of whom support the advice services are highly skilled. They all receive role-specific training and development from nationally recognised subject-experts including the Money Advise Trust, the Insolvency Service, Wiseradviser, National Homelessness Advice Service and Citizens Advice. All client-facing volunteers have significant experience in the provision of welfare benefits, housing, debt and money advice.</p>	<p><b>Enabling local residents to contribute their time and efforts into community activity – 8%</b></p> <p><b>Enabling local residents to feel safer in their communities – 4%</b></p> <p><b>A place for young people to meet and feel safe</b></p> <p><b><u>The recommended rent subsidy for this element is 16%, due to the significant involvement of volunteers in the delivery of the service.</u></b></p>
<p><b>We will work to strengthen the emotional and physical wellbeing of all Cheltenham residents</b></p> <p>This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling local people to be active</li> <li>• Helping local people make healthy lifestyle choices</li> <li>• Reducing the harm caused by alcohol</li> <li>• Improving mental health</li> <li>• Improving health &amp; wellbeing into older age</li> </ul>	<p>The submission demonstrated that that working with people to ensure they have adequate benefits and are supported to manage problems with debts, housing and employment has a positive impact on mental and physical health. Over 50% of the people Citizens Advice works with have a disability or long term health condition. The organisation knows that nearly 90% of people are satisfied with the service they receive.</p> <p>Additionally, Citizens Advice has projects that work specifically with people with disabilities and long-term health conditions to provide support over a long period of time. The team are regularly preventing homelessness, for example, with 1,116 housing enquiries in 2022-23 including homelessness applications and support with evictions.</p> <p>Citizens Advice is also able to provide grants and vouchers</p>	<p><b>Enabling local people to be active – 4%</b></p> <p><b>Helping local people make healthy lifestyle choices – 4%</b></p> <p><b>Reducing the harm caused by alcohol – 4%</b></p> <p><b>Improving mental health – 4%</b></p> <p><b>Improving health &amp; wellbeing into older age – 4%</b></p> <p><b><u>The recommended rent subsidy for this element is 20%.</u></b></p>

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	(such as food bank, fuel bank and data bank) to support people to have access to food and energy. This work has a tremendously positive impact on health and wellbeing.	
<b>Summary and recommended rent support grant</b>	North and West Gloucestershire Citizens Advice has demonstrated evidence of its important role in all of the themes assessed against, particularly in its provision of crucial advice and information to residents in need of support, which then impacts positively on their health and wellbeing. The involvement of volunteers in the delivery of its services is also significant.	<b><u>The total recommended rent subsidy is 64%</u></b>

<b>Financial considerations</b>	<b>Panel assessment</b>
<p>Will the grant award support the financial viability of the operation of the building?</p>	<p>North and West Gloucestershire Citizens Advice is a charity, providing vital support to the community, which is especially important during the cost of living crisis. The grant award supports the organisation to be financially sustainable and allows them to provide their services in a central location in Cheltenham.</p>
<p>Has the organisation got reasonable longer-term plans to sustain activities being delivered from the building beyond the term of the grant?</p>	<p>The organisation has a 3 year agreement with Cheltenham Borough Council to provide Advice Services and continuously fund raises to secure funding to continue service delivery into the future.</p>