

# Information on Citizen’s Advice Bureau in Somerset West and Taunton Council area

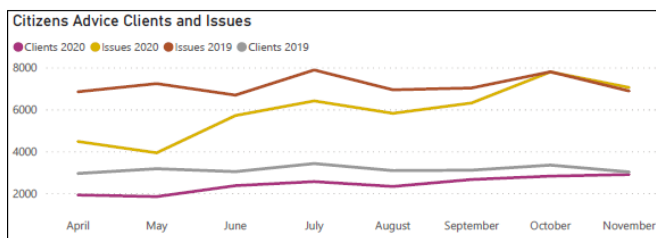
Information current as at 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Recommendation from Community Scrutiny on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 read as:

As part of the review of the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants, the increased workload for the two Citizens Advice Bureaus that cover the SWT area must be recognised accordingly with a grant increase in line with their objectives to meet increased demands due to COVID, and that this support is equalized across population areas that they cover, but not to the detriment of other organisations being funded by SWT.

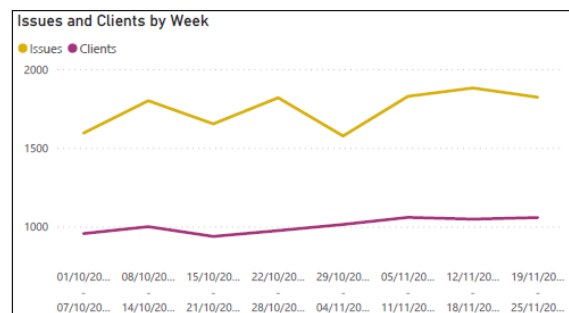
The table below is taken from information provided to the Community Resilience Cell as part of the multi-agency response to the COVID crisis.

## Community Resilience Cell Dashboard - Demand On System 3 - Citizens Advice



Citizens Advice Weekly Update:  
19/11/20 – 25/11/20 : 1061 clients 1825 issues, comparable to last week. Very similar picture around issues - benefits is top with Personal Independence Payments significant again this week along with Universal Credit initial claim, debt, housing and relationships all high with employment slightly less than previous weeks.

Category	Clients - September	Clients - October	Issues - September	Issues - October
Benefits & Tax Credits	663	725	1626	1844
Benefits Universal Credit	371	439	780	1110
Debt	298	307	805	902
Financial services & capability	257	287	376	490
Housing	286	280	584	548
Employment	253	258	572	552
Relationships & family	206	238	379	430
Legal	139	155	233	263
Other	129	143	199	196
Consumer goods & services	107	125	210	210
Utilities & communications	64	91	163	198
Travel & transport	78	69	115	98
Health & community care	60	61	113	91
Discrimination & Hate & GVA	38	47	58	75
Tax	33	46	45	77
Immigration & asylum	30	40	50	76
Education	18	16	24	24



In the graph to the top left, it can be seen that Issues in 2019 (the top line) are higher than those in 2020, coloured yellow. Further, that clients in 2019 are also higher than in 2020, as seen in the grey and purple lines on the same graph. Demand across the two years is only now converging so that demand is on a similar month on month level to last year.

Moving on to the issue of support being equalised across the two population areas that they cover:

Population Taunton Deane mid-year estimate 2019 is 120,000.

Population West Somerset mid-year estimate 2019 is 35,000.

(Source Somerset Information Network).

#### Funding received

Project	Total Awarded	General Fund	HRA
Citizen's Advice Taunton	£83,610	£75,432	£8,178
Taunton CAB – Debt Advice for Tenants (Money Matters enhanced service)	£42,000	-	£42,000
West Somerset Advice Bureau	£30,600	£30,600	

It can be seen that Taunton CAB receives £125,610 for a population of 120,000, of which £42,000 is debt and benefit advice for tenants of SWT Council, giving a net figure of £83,610.

West Somerset Advice Bureau gets £30,600 for a population of 35,000.

The conclusion that can be drawn is that there is no inequality in funding between the two bureaux. However, Taunton CAB gains a specific funding input for advice to tenants who exclusively live within Taunton CAB catchment and which comes from their rental payments, there being no SWT tenants in the former West Somerset area.