

Members Business debate on the launch of Drowning in Debt briefing sheets by Citizens Advice Scotland

Thursday 12th November 2009

Credit Crunch Funding: Supporting Scots through the Recession

Early this year the Treasury provided the Scottish Government with £1.1m in funding for investment in advice services to help Scots cope with the effects of the recession. In February 2009 the Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux received the £1.1m in funding through the Scottish Government and have since achieved the following:

- Bureaux report that they have seen an additional **6,603 clients**, and dealt with an additional **21,679 issues**. As some bureaux have only reported the number of clients they have seen while others have only reported the number of issues they have dealt with, it is likely that the additional funding has resulted in Scottish bureaux seeing **8,500 additional clients** and dealt with **39,400 additional issues**
- The funding has also provided greater support to the infrastructure of Scottish bureaux resulting in the training of an additional **297 volunteers**. Each trained volunteer is expected to provide **4.6 hours** of advice each week.^[2] A majority of volunteers are still in training, and once fully trained we expect to see a further increase in the number of clients seen by bureaux.
- All bureaux are working to increase their resources to better deal with the increased demand for advice. The funding has resulted in **68%** of bureaux being open an average of **5.2 additional hours** or are making these additional hours of access available while **32%** have increased resources so that they are able to see an additional number of clients during regular business hours.
- Citizens advice bureaux are providing additional appointments, they have increased opening hours, are providing home visits and outreach services.

Citizens advice bureaux throughout Scotland are making effective use of the £1.1 m in funding to deliver an enhanced service to clients. The funding, however, is expected to end on March 31, 2009 and has not been renewed as yet - though the advice and assistance sought from bureaux continues to grow as the impact of the recession continues to be felt across Scotland.

Call for Funding:

Credit crunch funding needs to be continued post March 2010 for citizens advice bureaux to continue to provide additional support to clients affected by the ongoing issues resulting from this recession.

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^[2] Average number of volunteer hours given weekly, Citizens Advice Bureau characteristics survey 2007-8