



A FORCE FOR CHANGE





Chair's foreword

I've read annual reports that were quite sophisticated in papering over the cracks and told the reader nothing worth knowing; I've read some that told me more about which side of bed the author got out of the morning they wrote it; and I've read some that do what they are supposed to do – give an interested reader a picture of what's going on.

I'm convinced this annual report tells it like it is, about CAS and the CAB service across Scotland. It speaks of real achievements, of effective new ways of working, of committed people working together.

As in many local Citizens Advice Bureaux, this positive story is set in the context of funding worries – a 10 per cent cut in CAS' core-funding from the Department of Trade & Industry, and maybe more to come. But we will continue to make CAS work effectively – to support Bureaux in their frontline work and to impact on the social policies that impact on CAB clients.

What the report doesn't say (because it only covers the year to April 2006, except for the update we've added), is that MORI's research found 98 per cent trust the confidential service of a CAB, and 97 per cent trust the quality service. That's amazing! Jokes about the remaining two or three per cent apart, this is really good news and a challenge to build on.

After nearly two years as chair, I'm still glad to be sharing that challenge with some amazing, committed and talented people.

Graham Blount , CAS chair



Chief Executive's introduction

Plenty of very positive developments took place in 2005/06. We continued to help strengthen the foundations of the CAB service, while managing to consolidate much of our existing outreach work by securing continuation funding.

Our ongoing drive to streamline and enhance the services we provide to our member Citizens Advice Bureaux saw the move to an entirely electronic information system and the first steps to make our volunteer training programme more flexible. And this against a background of tightening resources.

We have extended our reach and improved our service even further this year. Everyone in Scotland should have access to free, independent and confidential advice, and we are supporting Bureaux to make this a reality. And through our social policy work we are helping create a fairer and more just Scotland.

We are not complacent – but I think Scotland's CAB service has quite a bit to be proud of in 2005/06.

Kaliani Lyle, chief executive



Supporting Scotland's CAB service...

Citizens Advice Scotland is the umbrella body for Scotland's frontline Citizens Advice Bureau service.

From Shetland to the Borders, each CAB offers free, independent and confidential advice to the public on a wide range of issues from over 200 service-points. Each CAB is an individual charity that relies heavily on trained volunteers to deliver its service.

We support our member Bureaux to maintain and develop a consistently high level of service. We provide a comprehensive and constantly updated information system to underpin advice-giving, a training programme for all staff and volunteers, support with IT, help with press and marketing, and a focal point for the service's increasingly influential social policy remit.

Together, Scotland's Citizens Advice Bureau service continues to be one of the most familiar and trusted landmarks on our civic landscape.

But we know we have to be adaptable and responsive to changing needs. That's why in 2005/06, we have worked to help Bureaux enhance even further the service they offer to the public.



Key achievements 2005/06

- Our new web-based information system **AdviserNet** introduced, and a new electronic client case-recording system developed and ready for testing.
- Funding secured for our new **Blended Learning** initiative that will make training more accessible and flexible for CAB volunteers.
- Citizens Advice Scotland retains its **Investors in People** standard.
- **Adviceguide** –the UK CAB service’s basic online question-and-answer advice service – is ‘E.Government National Award Winner for 2005’.
- Scotland’s CAB service wins Executive backing to launch an **independent support service** to deal with queries and concerns regarding NHS treatment.
- Existing CAB service initiatives to provide **advice in sheriff courts, train asylum seekers as CAB volunteers**, and to **provide financial education** to vulnerable groups all win funding extensions.
- Our adviser training programme has been **accredited by Staffordshire University** and a pilot year begun.
- CAS secures significant concessions in the new Consumer Credit Bill over **‘Time Orders’** in Scotland, and on a tenancy deposit scheme in the Executive’s new Housing Bill.

... and in 2006/07

An Ipsos MORI Scotland survey found that **92 per cent** of CAB clients would be likely to use the service again (**80 per cent** ‘very likely’), while **94 per cent** would recommend CAB to a friend or relative. **93 per cent** of members of the public surveyed were satisfied with CAB advice they had received.



A vision for the delivery of advice

Our aim is to ensure that the CAB service is at the heart of the delivery of advice in Scotland. In 2005/06, we have worked to enhance the quality of the advice we give and extend the reach of the service...

Our membership scheme

Although each Citizens Advice Bureau is an independent charity, the right to retain the CAB name and logo depends on meeting exacting membership criteria. All Bureaux are monitored every three years to ensure they meet consistently high professional standards and satisfy six key conditions:

- Meeting the 12 principles of the CAB Service
- Providing wide-ranging advice, information and assistance,
- Developing social policy at national and local level,
- Working in a local community context,
- Ensuring effective management is in place,
- Providing quality advice.

Full training and support from CAS is given to Bureaux to ensure they comply. This year we embarked on the second cycle of audits. A key feature of this round is that we have increased the 'Quality of Advice' threshold that each Bureau must attain, as part of our drive for continuous improvement.

Following a pilot initiative last year with Homepoint, we now have in place an audit process that will allow Bureaux to gain accreditation for national standards in housing advice and information alongside their membership audit.

CAB advice the right prescription

The CAB service is poised to assume a major new role in helping the public take forward any complaints and concerns they have about the NHS – including GPs, hospitals and even NHS-funded private healthcare.

In March, the Executive asked Scotland's Health Boards to contract with local Bureaux to assume this complaints-handling role, previously held by local health councils. Bureaux won't adjudicate in any concerns or complaints brought forward, but they will help clients engage with the system on level terms, as well as providing more general advice in healthcare settings.

This move could open up a whole new dimension to CAB work. A specialist support team, based in CAS, will support Bureaux with training, information and marketing.



New Citizens Advice Bureaux

New Citizens Advice Bureaux may be established in the Highlands following a full-scale review of advice and information services by Highland Council. Its report recommends that all voluntary organisations funded by the council to provide advice to the public should become bureaux within the next three years. The report also singles out existing local Bureaux for praise as “areas of innovation and excellence”.

Perceptions of CAS and CAB

In 2005/06, CAS commissioned a new survey by the independent firm Ipsos MORI Scotland to gauge public perceptions of the CAB service.

A telephone survey was conducted with 501 adults who had used the CAB service in the period October 2005 to April 2006. A second survey of 1,064 members of the general public was undertaken with a nationally representative sample of Scottish adults between January and March 2006. The findings of both surveys will be released in summer 2006.

Meanwhile, over 400 Bureaux workers responded to our Bureau Satisfaction Survey in 2005/06. Satisfaction with all CAS departments remains high, although we will develop an action plan to address areas for improvement.



Services accessible across Scotland

Our aim is to see significant growth in the number of people using our advice service. In 2005/06, we extended our reach in new directions...

CAB service to play key role in extending legal advice

Part V of the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986 provides for the Scottish Legal Aid Board to employ solicitors to act for people receiving legal aid, to give advice and assistance and to work with local organisations

The CAB service emerged as a major beneficiary of a £800,000 initiative in 2005/06 to extend access to legal advice in communities across Scotland.

Following a successful evaluation of our existing 'Part V' project - which funds a solicitor to support six Bureaux in the Highlands - the Scottish Legal Aid Board approved a bid to extend the reach of the project to Lochaber CAB.

This has allowed us to continue our training programme to allow individual advisors to gain in-depth legal knowledge of issues particular to their own community.

The CAB service is also an active partner in two new Part V projects funded by SLAB in 2005/06.

The Fife Rights Forum will provide specialised legal advice and representation to clients with mental health problems, particularly young people and children. Citizens Advice Rights Fife will be the lead agency. Legal training on mental health issues will be given to forum staff and local solicitors.

The Disability Legal Advice Project is a partnership between CAS, Capability Scotland, Update and the Disability Rights Commission to improve access to legal advice for disabled people in North and South Lanarkshire.

Helping ethnic minorities in Lanarkshire

A new partnership to enhance access to legal advice and support for Lanarkshire's black and ethnic minority communities was launched in March between the district's nine Citizens Advice Bureaux and the Ethnic Minority Law Centre. The initiative is funded by the two local authorities.

A two-way referral process allows Bureaux to refer clients to the EMLC and vice versa, depending on the specialist knowledge and expertise required. A trainee solicitor has been appointed to provide legal advice and co-ordinate the partnership.



Helping asylum seekers to integrate

Many asylum seekers and refugees have professional skills and talents but don't have permission to work. A groundbreaking project by Glasgow-Maryhill CAB to train them as volunteer CAB advisers has now been extended to two other Bureaux.

Before entering our mainstream training programme, the new recruits attend a six-day induction on subjects such as council tax, benefits and the UK/Scottish legal and parliamentary systems. The project has received enquiries from more than 30 different nationalities, including Zimbabwe, Iraq, Iran, Rwanda and Congo.

Its success is summed up in the words of one volunteer: "When you are an asylum seeker you lose your dignity. But when someone believes in you, and gives you a chance to prove you are good at something, then you regain that dignity."

Advice far from home

Some migrant workers find Scotland hard work, turning to Bureaux to complain of low pay, long hours and bad accommodation. Their problems are compounded by language difficulties and uncertainty over basic rights.

Lochaber CAB's new Migrant Worker Advice Project secured two-year funding from CAS to produce a welcome-pack in a number of different languages, after noting an increased number of foreign nationals requesting help.

The project has seen numerous people from the former Eastern Bloc countries that acceded to the European Union in May 2004 but whose citizens still have to register to work in the UK. It has also helped Canadians, Australians, South Africans, Bulgarians, Romanian, Spanish, Portuguese, Sri Lankans and Russians.

Often, the advice given is not just for the client but also for their family or other work colleagues. The top ones so far have been immigration rules, benefits, income tax and legal proceedings.

A similar project is also in place with Ross & Cromarty CAB.



Veterans need advice, too!

Veterans come in all shapes and sizes. They aren't just people who served in the two world wars or have been involved in combat. There are over 10 million veterans and their dependants in the UK and our challenge is to reach out and unlock the many services and benefits available to this group.

In early 2006, CAS worked with the Ministry of Defence to produce a new resource-pack to help CAB advisers recognise the problems that former military personnel can experience. We want to encourage all veterans to see the CAB as their point of call.

In Court advice

Courts can be daunting places to those not used to them! But litigants and other court users can access free, independent legal advice inside five sheriff courts thanks to an innovative CAB service initiative.

Our advisers provide on-the-spot advice on issues such as rent arrears and evictions, debt negotiation and benefits. And they can also help those who don't have someone to represent them. Based in Aberdeen, Airdrie, Hamilton and Dundee and Edinburgh, this has proved so successful that the Executive has extended its funding for a further three years in 2005/06.

Welcome news - because, good advice can make a crucial difference to how people present their case and reach a satisfactory conclusion!

Hundreds of court-users have accessed on-the-spot legal advice since the initiative began 18 months ago, and 97 per cent of clients surveyed said they would recommend the service to others. Many stated that they could not have coped without this assistance. A number even reported that an in-court adviser had saved them and their families from eviction.

Court clerks, sheriffs and legal practitioners have said the service saved them time, helped expedite court proceedings, and filled a gap in civil justice.

Sheriff Richard Davidson, Dundee Sheriff Court, said: "The in-court advice project has produced a significant benefit to the running of the court system, especially the summary cause and small claims courts, and particularly in relation to the assistance it has given those threatened with eviction and on behalf of those baffled by the housing benefits system. The sheriffs here hope the project will continue its good work."



Financial education

How can we best help our most vulnerable people avoid a lifetime of debt? Through upfront financial education for a start.

Seven Bureaux are focusing help on individuals at potential crisis-points in their lives - such as homeless people getting a first tenancy; young people leaving care, starting work or entering further education; lone parents having a baby. The projects offer help that will hopefully pre-empt the need for crisis advice later on.

These Executive-funded pilots are producing very positive results and will be evaluated next year.

Highlands homelessness

A new telephone advice line aimed at people in the Highlands who are homeless or at risk of homelessness was launched in Inverness in October.

The Highland Homeless Advice Line is run by Citizens Advice Direct, a CAS member that has already pioneered telephone advice in Glasgow. As well as help and information on housing issues, the advice line also helps callers on related matters such as debt, benefits and employment.

The Advice Line is funded by Homepoint, Highland Council and Citizens Advice Direct.

Developing e.government locally

CAS helped initiate a new direct access initiative between the Bureaux in Musselburgh and Haddington and East Lothian Council. Bureaux money advisers can now access - via internet link - the local authority's records on council tax, housing benefit and rent arrears, allowing them to instantly track the progress of a client's application.

Helping Bureaux in difficulty

CAS was active in negotiating a local authority funding package that would allow Argyle & Bute CAB to continue in 2005/06. However, the closure of Clydebank CAB in March, the first Scottish Bureau to shut since 1998, was very disappointing.

CAB is just the job

Glasgow's eight Citizens Advice Bureaux help to support 120 additional jobs through the amount of money they win for clients, according to the Fraser of Allander Institute. The economic consultancy agency was commissioned to quantify the impact of CAB activity on the city's economy.

"Because low-income residents spend a high majority of any increase in income, and because most of the initial increase in spending is on local goods and services, a substantial proportion of the total increase in employment occurs in Glasgow," noted the Institute's report.



Healthy Advice

Across Scotland, many Bureaux are already engaged in health projects. People affected by illness or injury often do need advice on issues such as sickness and disability benefits, how to manage debts and mortgages if they are no longer working, and what their employment rights are.

A better deal for cancer sufferers

Cancer patients and their carers in Grampian are to get more help, thanks to a new partnership between Macmillan Cancer Relief, the Pensions Service and the Citizens Advice Bureaux in Aberdeen, Banff and Buchan, and Moray.

The five-year initiative, funded by Macmillan and launched in spring, will offer money advice sessions in Bureaux and hospitals as well as home-visits to the housebound. Patients over 60 will also be offered a home-visit by the Pensions Service to undertake a benefits-check. Any additional advice or information needs identified will be referred back to people's nearest CAB. Bureaux in Orkney and Shetland will also deliver local support services for patients who use cancer services in Grampian.

A similar partnership between Macmillan and the CAB service operates in Lanarkshire.

Advice on prescription

An outreach project, managed by Perth CAB and funded by the CAS development committee, has been situated within a local pharmacy in Blairgowrie in 2005.

Changes in the way community pharmacies are funded mean they now have a stronger public health role. Discussions between CAS and the Scottish Pharmaceutical General Council concluded that there could be considerable demand from clients who might otherwise have difficulty in accessing CAB services.

As well as delivering an effective information and advice service, the project will aim to help tackle health inequalities and improve public health. If successful, similar services may be introduced elsewhere in Scotland as part of the new pharmacy contracts with the Scottish Executive.

Under NHS Lothian's 'Good Advice=Better Health' initiative, CAB advisers have helped patients in eight GP surgeries one day a week, as well as doing home-visits.

One Edinburgh GP said it had transformed the lives of some of his patients. "From seeing them all the time suddenly you don't see them. It stops us having to medicalise their problems – getting help with benefits reduces anxiety and we don't have to prescribe drugs."



A quality service to Bureaux

Our aim here is to support Bureaux in delivering high quality advice through expert back-up...

Information

All Bureaux advice-giving is underpinned by the comprehensive information system maintained by CAS. This system, indexed and constantly updated, contains 15,000 pages of information on legislation, procedures, contacts, etc. Our information writers added 23 items to the system on new Scottish legislative changes this year, and made 50 substantial amendments to existing items.

In 2005/06, we took a major step forward with the move to an entirely electronic system, withdrawing the paper update of the information system issued to Bureaux every month. In December, we launched AdviserNet, a new system that bureaux can access via the web.

AdviserNet gives every CAB adviser access to the most up-to-date facts and figures available. This system allows information to be updated more frequently and links can be followed much more quickly than with paper. Training in AdviserNet was provided to all Bureaux who requested it.

Meanwhile, Adviceguide – the UK CAB services' basic online question-and-answer advice service – was the 'E.Government National Award Winner for 2005'.

Our information system is revised and updated constantly. For instance, the introduction of 'civil partnerships' into Scottish law in December - giving same-sex couples much the same rights as heterosexuals – required CAS to revise and update around a third of the information system, including topics such as inheritance, housing tenure, child custody, pensions, shared liabilities, immigration and nationality, tax and welfare benefits.

Training

Training ensures that Bureaux staff, volunteers and management committees perform to a consistently high standard.

We provide free courses, training materials and support to Bureaux personnel. In 2005/06, 55 training courses were offered with a total of 702 places. But our 'cascade' approach - by which people trained by CAS in turn train their colleagues in Bureaux - means the impact is extended even further.



We also assisted Bureaux to provide Competences scheme for advisers. The latter sets a standard for each role within a Bureau to ensure that all workers are equipped and confident to perform their role. This year, CAS worked with the Scottish Executive to develop Competences for money-related advice. New tutor-training tools and materials were also developed and piloted in autumn.

In 2005/06, we developed training sessions specifically for Bureaux managers on change management, managing staff performance, and planning and managing IT. We also simplified and expanded our training materials on benefits, the single biggest subject-area within our adviser training programme.

In another very welcome development in 2005/06, our adviser training programme has now been accredited by Staffordshire University and a pilot year begun. A number of CAB advisers underwent the accredited Certificate in Higher Education in Advice Studies there this year.

Blended Learning

While the CAB service has always relied on trained volunteers, we can no longer just assume everyone can fit into a pre-set training programme. Blended Learning aims to be more sensitive to the needs of both trainees and Bureaux and provide a wider range of training options.

The Blended Learning initiative won start-up funding from Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Highlands and Islands Partnership Programme this year.

A three-year pilot will begin with five Highlands and Islands Bureaux in early 2007. This project will look at what role technology can play in enhancing the training already on offer. Training and materials will be developed that can be delivered over the CAS intranet, and e-tutoring and mentoring will be available to support trainees who wish to access learning in this way.



IT

Information Technology is absolutely central to a modern 21st century advice service. Our IT training programme ensures that every Bureaux worker is trained in the basics of IT, helping them develop the knowledge and skills to manage increasingly complex hardware and software, and to maximise use of new technology for advice-provision.

With the standardisation of IT infrastructure across the CAB service, our Helpdesk service for Bureaux allows us to quickly diagnose and rectify problems such as server failures, no matter how remote the location. The Helpdesk dealt with 2,310 calls in 2005/06.

This year we also changed our broadband provider resulting in savings for CAS and Bureaux of around £50,000.

CASTLE

Client case-evidence is vital in informing our social policy work. We have worked to develop an electronic case-recording system that Bureaux can use to input each client's details and return case-evidence to CAS.

This new system, 'Cases and Statistics Linked Electronically' system (CASTLE), could revolutionise CAB administration and social policy work. With CASTLE, all of a client's details would be held in one place, accessed via a secure internet connection. This will allow us to instantly collate cases – by type of problem, postcode, local authority ward area, year, etc – more securely, more efficiently and more effectively!

Citizens Advice Rights Fife will be the first Bureau to pilot CASTLE in 2006/07.



CAS makes presence felt online

Visits to the CAS website (www.cas.org.uk) jumped by almost a third in 2005, with 25 per cent more visitors making return visits.

Between September and April, there had been 50,150 visitors to the site, averaging out at 340 visits per day, with 3,120 pages being viewed each day. Most people are using the site's 'Find a Bureau' function. The volume of visits to the 'Volunteering' pages is also very encouraging, with the conversion rate to e-mail applications received at 15 per cent.

Over the year, CAS partnered with workwithus.org to develop an easy to use tool that would enable Bureaux to publish high-quality websites, consistent with the CAB house style. This will be made fully available in 2006.

Both our website and intranet were developed to comply with internationally-recognised accessibility standards. In 2005, CAS commissioned the specialist organisation Abilitynet to carry out an accessibility audit of both sites.

Specialist support

CAS helped Bureaux to understand and engage with the **community planning** system in 2005/06, through advice and information and direct negotiation with local authorities. Already, some Bureaux are lending their expertise to local community planning partnerships.

CAS' **legal consultant** provided four training courses in employment rights in 2005/06, and responded to 282 Bureaux enquiries. **The Free Representation Unit** dealt with 36 legal referrals.

Our **MATRICES** (Money Advice Training, Resource, Information and Consultancy Service) initiative, run in partnership with Money Advice Scotland, provides expert money advice to Bureaux. This year, it dealt with 324 enquiries, over 90 per cent of which had an initial response within one day.

CAS has also partnered Shelter Scotland in the **Scottish Homeless Advisory Service**, providing second-tier advice to Bureaux advisers on housing issues. Following an evaluation, the service will be extended to a wider range of housing advice providers in 2006.

A range of **media and marketing** materials were produced this year. We also engaged widely with local and national media promoting the service itself and the issues of concern to its clients. In 2005/06, we issued 44 press releases, nearly all of which won media coverage.



CAS conference

Over 400 delegates from Bureaux across Scotland met in Edinburgh in August for our two-day annual conference.

The nation's escalating personal debt crisis, government plans to reform Incapacity Benefit, and the growing role of CAB advice in healthcare settings were among key topics discussed. Speakers include John Elvidge, permanent secretary to the Scottish Executive and the country's most senior civil servant.

Advice Week 2005

The theme of our annual awareness week in September was *There's More to CAB Than You Think!* We helped Bureaux highlight the wide range of settings they now offer advice in, including courts, GP clinics and hospitals, tribunals, schools and colleges – even people's homes if they are house-bound.

We also highlighted the increasingly influential role the CAB service is playing in shaping social policy. During Advice Week, our social policy officer appeared on Scottish Television's *Politics Now* programme to comment on proposed welfare changes.



Gaining the resources needed

During 2005/06, CAS was notified of a 10 per cent cut in its core-grant from the Department of Trade & Industry. Despite this, we achieved our target of supporting Bureaux to secure a total of £3.75m to deliver their service. An additional £633,767 allocated by our development committee to Bureaux helped set up 18 innovative projects and refurbish four Bureaux premises.

Volunteering

Volunteers remain the lifeblood of the CAB service - around 85 per cent of CAB workers are trained volunteers.

Our revamped website continues to direct prospective volunteers to Bureaux across the country. Last quarter alone (Jan to March 2006) we received 352 applications, which were distributed to 51 Bureaux - double the number of prospective volunteers through the website for the same period last year. One in three online applicants are aged under 25.

In March, CAS undertook an advertising campaign in the national press and their related websites. This campaign generated around a quarter of the total online applications from January to March.

Advising is by far the most popular role for online applicants. However, increasing interest in IT, management committee, and fundraising roles is being shown.

Communicating the value of the service

At a local level, CAS staff participated in 515 funding and negotiation meetings, 380 national development meetings and 38 meetings to market the CAB service.

We also participated in numerous strategic committees and working groups, including the Scottish Executive's financial exclusion group and advisory group on racial equality, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's poverty and development committee, and the Scottish Consumer Council's civil justice review.

In 2005/06, we undertook internal audits to ensure that CAS sections are working to optimum efficiency in supporting Bureaux and maximising the impact of our social policy work. We believe our staff complement delivers an extremely effective service relative to its numbers.



Making a difference to peoples' lives

'Exercising a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally, remains the second main aim of Scotland's CAB service...

The CAS social policy team collates and analyses the client case-evidence returned by Bureaux and works to focus this onto the public and political agenda. We do this by publishing reports and briefings; giving evidence to Parliamentary committees and consultations; meeting with MSPs, MPs and civil servants; and engaging with the media.

Our free quarterly journal *Inform* - sent to all Scottish MSPs, MPs, and local authority elected members and staff - reports on the issues that most concern CAB clients.

In 2005/06, this work further positioned CAS as an influential voice in shaping social policy and legislation, both at Holyrood and Westminster.

- We produced briefings for MSPs and MPs (on tax credits, student debt, the Consumer Credit Bill, the Bankruptcy and Diligence Bill, the Social Fund, bank arrestments, a tenancy deposit scheme, prescription charges, council tax and employment problems). We also produced 14 consultation responses for Holyrood and Westminster
- We gave written and oral evidence to Parliamentary committees (including the Scottish Parliament health committee on prescription charges, and the Work and Pensions Select Committee on incapacity benefit).
- We met with Ministers and with the convenors of the Cross-Parliamentary Group on Debt and the Enterprise and Culture Committee.



In 2005/06, we also focused on four Bills going through Holyrood and Westminster:

Housing Bill – we secured an amendment granting an enabling power for ministers to introduce regulations to safeguard tenants’ deposits.

Prescription charges - our evidence persuaded the Scottish parliament health committee that reforms were needed, and the Executive is consulting further on this.

Bankruptcy and Diligence Bill – we helped secure changes on ‘land attachment’ and the inclusion of a fixed sum for bank arrestment (work here is ongoing into 2006/07).

Consumer Credit Bill – we moved for ‘time orders’ to be included in the Act.

Publications

In June, we published a major report on tax credits, *Money With Your Name On It*, in liaison with Citizens Advice in England and Wales which won widespread media coverage.

Research

To coincide with the Government’s reforms to the welfare system, we embarked on a major piece of research into CAB clients’ experience of claiming sickness and invalidity benefits. The report will be published in summer 2006.

Toolkits

We produced various Local Action Toolkits to help Bureaux take action on behalf of their clients, including one produced in conjunction with Govan Law Centre that helped many clients successfully challenge excessive bank charges.

Media

Throughout 2005/06, we achieved substantial coverage of our social policy work in both national and local media. Among this, in September we recorded an open-editorial slot on Scottish Television’s flagship *Politics Now* programme regarding incapacity benefit.



Treasurer's Report

Introduction

The Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (Citizens Advice Scotland) publishes full formal accounts as prescribed by law under the Companies Act and other legislation, such as that relating to charities.

The level of detail in the accounts can confuse readers unfamiliar with formal accounts. Consequently, this short report is intended as a more readily understandable summary of the Association's financial position and includes a comparison with the financial position last year. A full set of accounts can however be obtained from CAS at 1st Floor Spectrum House, 2 Powderhall Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4GB

In summary, I am pleased to report that the Association received continuing support from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) with a grant in aid to fund core activities of £3.24 million. In addition, the Association has secured other income from a number of sources. The majority of this other income is directed at providing specialised information and advice for Bureaux in areas such as money advice, housing and law. Core expenditure continues to be monitored closely. Many items of expenditure have decreased in the year. Increases reflect increasing use of technology and connection to the internet, the costs of the new wing accommodating project staff, and costs of surveys aimed at understanding the perceptions of the public and external stakeholders of the CAB service.

Looking ahead, developments in information technology continue to provide significant opportunities for improvements in service provision and in the quality of social policy evidence. The DTI have indicated that it is unlikely that there will be an increase in the grant in aid. As a result, fundraising, and other income generation will become increasingly important for the continued improvement and development of the service.

Income

Income for the year was £4,055,661 (2004/2005: £3,827,263). Citizens Advice Scotland is grateful for the significant and continued support from the Department of Trade and Industry which provided a grant of £3,240,000 (2004/2005: £3,103,343) to fund core activities.

The Association continues to seek additional sources of funds, over and above the grant-in-aid from the DTI, to finance other relevant activities. During the year continuing grants of £25,180 were received to fund work on the Scottish Homelessness Advisory Project (SHAS), grants of £15,244 were received from the Scottish Legal Aid Board to fund the Part V Project. Various grants totalling £430,760 were received from the Scottish Executive to fund a money advice project, a NHS complaints handling service and a financial education project. In addition, the association received £2,506 from Highlands and Islands Enterprise to fund job evaluation of paid Bureaux staff by external consultants, £7,882 was received from the Ministry of



Defence in order to undertake a promotional campaign aimed at raising awareness of Bureaux capabilities in supporting veterans, and £10,000 was received from Money Advice Trust in order to develop and maintain the training of Bureaux advisers.

Expenditure

Total expenditure in the year was £4,353,054 (2004/2005: £4,001,886). This was comprised of expenditure under general funds of £3,347,904, expenditure in designated funds of £107,988 and expenditure under restricted funds of £897,162.

Expenditure under general funds in the year was £3,347,904 (2004/2005: £3,046,404). This was comprised of the following:

	2005/2006 £000	2004/2005 £000
Costs of generating funds	69	68
Costs of charitable activities	3,195	2,884
Governance costs	84	94
	3,348	3,046

Core expenditure continues to be monitored closely. Many items of expenditure have decreased during the year. However, increases are due to increasing use of technology and connection to the internet, costs of the new wing accommodating the IT department and project staff, and costs of surveys aimed at understanding the perceptions of the public and stakeholders of the CAB service.

During the year, there was expenditure of £107,988 under designated funds. Designated funds arise where the directors designate that retained funds are set-aside for a specific purpose. Such funds are kept separately and can only be used for the purpose specified by the directors. The predominant cost in the year was depreciation on office fixtures and fittings and the intranet. Expenditure also includes the costs of a bureaux management training programme.

Expenditure under restricted funds was £897,162. Restricted funds arise when money is granted to the Association for a particular purpose. Such reserves are kept separately and can only be used for the purpose specified by the donor. During the year, significant progress continues to be made on the Money Advice and Financial Education projects, expenditure associated with this is £196,000 and £297,000 respectively. In addition, expenditure includes depreciation of £215,000 following the completion of the Bureaux infrastructure project which provided a server and client server network as well as a PC dedicated for training in each Bureau.



Transfers

During the course of the year a number of transfers were made between general, designated and restricted funds. The most significant transfer was of £118,000 transferred from general funds to designated funds. This money was set aside by the Board in order to develop a blended learning approach in the adviser training program. The funding set aside by the Board matches funds to be received from Highland and Island Enterprise Partnership and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Income less expenditure after transfers

The net effect of the above income, expenditure and transfers was a surplus of £111,058 on general funds, a surplus of £867 on designated funds and a deficit of £409,318 on restricted funds. These sums are added or are funded from reserves.

Reserves

Reserves arise where money is received which is not spent or where money is received which is spent on fixed assets that have not been fully depreciated.

At the end of the financial year there were restricted fund reserves of £483,872. A detailed composition of restricted funds and the reasons for holding these reserves are outlined in note 18 to the annual accounts.

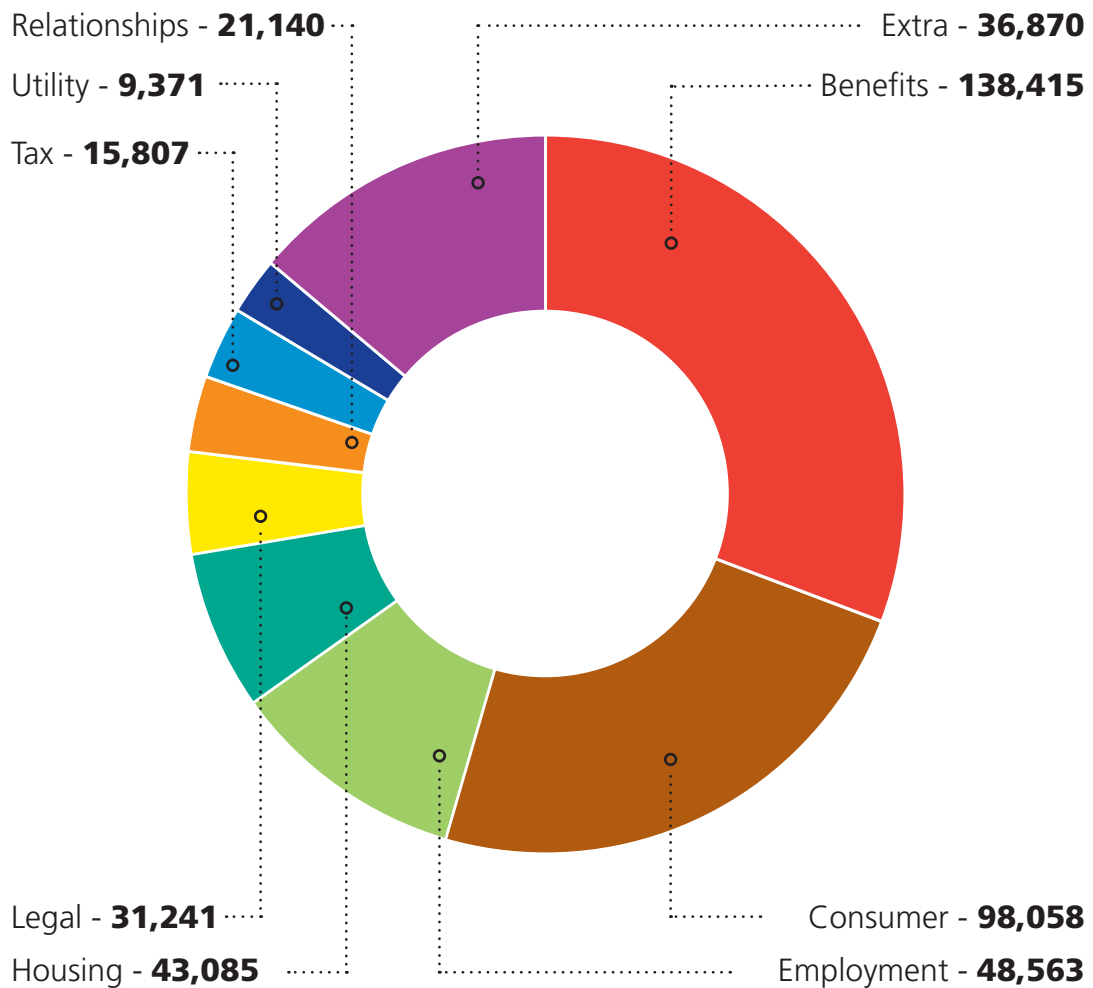
At the end of the financial year there were designated funds of £506,712. The composition of these designated funds and the reasons for holding them are outlined in note 18 to the annual accounts.

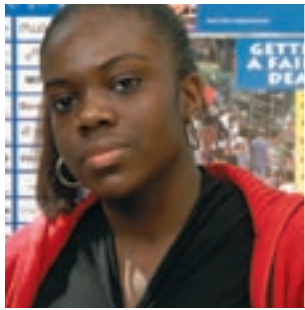
In addition to these restricted and designated funds at 31 March 2006 there was a general fund of £972,332. Free reserves, that is reserves not tied up in fixed assets, were £778,748. The Association requires to maintain a level of free reserves principally to meet ongoing obligations at the beginning of each financial quarter before the central grant is received from the Department of Trade and Industry. The Board of Directors is satisfied that free reserves of £778,748 is sufficient given the funding secured with the DTI for 2006/2007. In coming to this decision the board has taken into account the fact that DTI funding for 2006/2007 has been reduced by 10%.

Fixed asset additions

During the year £294,402 was spent on fixed assets. This is comprised principally of expenditure of £39,337 for replacement of motor vehicles, £136,216 on the fit-out of additional accommodation in Spectrum House, and £80,577 spent on replacing and improving IT infrastructure.

The main concerns for CAB clients in 2005/06





The CAB Service aims

- To ensure that individuals do not suffer through lack of knowledge of their rights or responsibilities, or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their needs effectively;

And equally:

- To exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally.

The CAB Service is independent and provides free, confidential and impartial advice to everybody regardless of race, sex, disability or sexuality.



The 12 principles of CAB Service membership:

- a free service
- confidentiality
- impartiality
- independence
- accessibility
- effectiveness
- community accountability
- the client's right to decide
- a voluntary service
- empowerment
- information retrieval
- a generalist service



A FORCE FOR CHANGE

The Management Team

Kaliani Lyle

Chief Executive Officer

Susan McPhee

Head of Social Policy and Public Affairs

Annabelle Ridley

Head of Training

Lucie McKenzie

Head of Field Services

Jacqui Cummings

Human Resources Manager

Calum Coulter

IT Manager

Seonaid Fowler

Finance Manager

Elizabeth Sykes

Head of Information

The following were appointed at the AGM held in November 2005:

Graham Blount

was appointed Chair for his second-year term.

Sam Hewitt

was appointed Vice Chair for his second-year term

Brian Evans

was appointed Honorary Treasurer for his second-year term

Andy Borland

Margaret Burgess*

Duncan Dennett

Gloria Fleming*

Rosaleen Kavanagh*

Gavin Kenny

Tom Leggate*

George Lochrie

Jane H Marnie

Nola Meikle

George MacDonald*

Margaret McIntyre

Dominic Notarangelo

David Rodger*

Margaret Rose*

Len Scott

** Appointed to Board at 2005 AGM.*

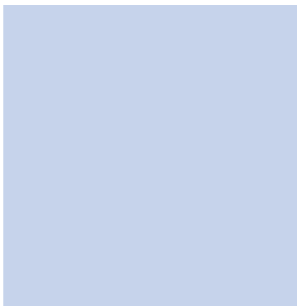
The following left the Board at the 2005 AGM:

William Kidd

Joseph McCormack

Frank Mosson

Irene Mungall



A FORCE FOR CHANGE



Citizens Advice Scotland

Spectrum House
2 Powderhall Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4GB

Tel 0131 550 1000
Fax 0131 550 1001
e.mail infor@cas.org.uk
website www.cas.org.uk

For further information, contact Citizens Advice Scotland on **0131 550 1000** or **www.cas.org.uk**