



Citizens Advice Scotland

Strategic Plan

2013-2017

Who we are

Citizens Advice Scotland and its 61 member bureaux form Scotland's largest independent advice network. CAB advice services are delivered using over 250 service points throughout Scotland, from the islands to city centres.

Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) is the national umbrella body that provides support services for Scottish citizens advice bureaux and collates client case evidence to shape policy in Scotland and the UK. In particular, CAS:

- Provides a range of services and the best possible advice and support to its member bureaux to meet the needs of existing and potential clients
- Sets quality standards and audits bureaux compliance with these standards
- Is the voice of the CAB Service in Scotland and its clients to raise the profile of the service and make changes to social policy.

Vision

A fairer Scotland where people as citizens and consumers are empowered and their rights respected.

Mission

- To support a robust and sustainable network of citizens advice bureaux across Scotland in the provision of information, advice, education and representation for all who need it.
- To be a voice for citizens and consumers in Scotland and to represent their interests to Government

Values

Integrity: CAS speaks truth to power. Our advocacy is rooted in real experiences. CAS will advance policy solutions and comment on policy and service delivery in a manner that contributes to the common good of the people of Scotland. CAS brings integrity to everything that we do, the organisation is open and transparent and willing to be accountable for all of our actions.

Trust: CAS works hard to earn the trust of the network of CAB we support, the decision makers we seek to influence, the media and the Scottish public.

Good stewardship: CAS delivers value for the public money that we receive, adds value to the work of the CAB network across Scotland, has robust lines of accountability to the Board of Trustees and the key stakeholders we serve.

Servant Leadership: CAS promotes the servant leadership model at all levels of the organisation and across the network. The Servant Leader shares power, puts the needs of others first, and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.

Quality: CAS will invest in quality by ensuring that we continuously monitor, review and improve our governance, management and service delivery, processes and practices.

Service: Keeping in line of sight the people that we are here to serve will ensure that our decision making, deployment of resources, our communications and service delivery are all focussed on getting the very best outcomes for the clients of the Citizens Advice Service across the network.

Strategic Aim 1

To support the Scottish Citizens Advice Service to provide multi channel access to information, education, advice and representation for all who need it.

Objectives

1. CAS will focus on ensuring that bureaux have sufficient financial resources to support the provision of information, education, advice and representation for all who need it.
2. CAS will support the full spectrum of multi-channel advice giving from early intervention and self-help through to representation.
3. CAS will ensure that all CAB have access to an efficient, user friendly case management and recording system which also reports bureaux statistics to funders.
4. CAS will ensure that all CAB have access to shared services and the support of the IT infrastructure required to provide education, advice and information for all who need it.
5. CAS will provide bureaux with effective organisational development and infrastructure support.

Outcome statement

CAS can report on the number of Scots who access information, education, advice and representation across the network, and report on client outcomes. Funding for bureaux has remained stable across the network and CAS can report on the contribution to the common good that this funding has realised.

Indicators

Bureaux funding levels and national spread

Client profile, especially age - linked to multi channel advice

Improvement in audit compliance.

Strategic Aim 2

To act in partnership with the CAB, wider advice sector and other governmental and non governmental actors to mitigate the harmful impacts of welfare reform on the Scottish economy, communities, families and individuals.

Objectives

1. CAS will continue to monitor and report to stakeholders and decision makers on the impacts of welfare reform including devolved benefits.
2. CAS will support bureaux to report and raise awareness of the impact of welfare changes in their community.
3. CAS will identify and seek to improve problems with the administration of key benefits and processes and support bureaux to do so at a local level, in particular in relation to the implementation of Universal Credit (UC) and Personal Independence Payments (PIP).
4. CAS will support bureaux to provide the full spectrum of welfare reform advice and to collect and report statistical and policy evidence.
5. CAS will contribute to Scotland's capacity to mitigate the negative impact of welfare reform on vulnerable clients. It will do this by working with a wide range of agencies both nationally and locally and by working across a range of areas including service delivery, resource development, training, awareness raising, information sharing, and coordination.

Outcome statement

CAS can report on the contribution that the CAB network has made to mitigating the harmful impacts of welfare reform. CAS can report on changes to the delivery of welfare reform which have arisen as a consequence of its intervention.

Indicators

Changes to policy/process as a result of policy work

Change in public opinion

Amount of funds raised for bureaux for welfare reform

Stakeholder survey: improvement in statements about partnership working.

Strategic Aim 3

To be a strong voice for consumers in Scotland and to ensure that the Scottish consumer interest is well represented in UK and European markets and policy making spaces.

Objectives

1. CAS will seek to influence pricing policy of the energy companies to end the poverty premium in energy whereby the poorest pay the most for their gas and electricity.
2. CAS will seek to work with a coalition of organisations to achieve a reduction in fuel poverty in Scotland.
3. CAS will seek to make consumers aware of their rights and responsibilities through the provision of campaigns, resources, education, information materials and advice at a national and local level.
4. CAS, in close coordination with Citizens Advice (England & Wales), will provide an integrated and efficient service for Scottish consumers and citizens, incorporating advocacy, research, campaigns and education.
5. CAS will use our evidence base to be the leading organisation representing the needs of users of the civil justice system.
6. CAS will work in partnership with other organisations where appropriate to strengthen the voice of the advice sector and develop appropriate services in response to the needs of clients.

Outcome statement

CAS can report on actions which have contributed to an improvement in customer satisfaction, consumer rights and policy in Scotland.

Indicators

Stakeholders and consumers have confidence in CAS' ability to deliver consumer service

Demonstrable impact of each campaign / programme of activity (winnable demand and supported action)

Any change resulting from policy work.

Strategic Aim 4

To prioritise and take action on the issues faced by the vulnerable, poor and socially excluded citizens and consumers of Scotland.

Objectives

1. CAS will seek to work with other organisations to ensure that the poorest, most vulnerable and socially excluded members of society are not excluded from accessing services as a result of “digital by default” policy.
2. Using our evidence base, CAS will identify target groups and issues, take action and promote solutions where appropriate, and seek to influence policy and practice to promote social inclusion.
3. CAS will work collaboratively with other organisations to secure positive outcomes for identified target groups.
4. CAS will create resources and provide support to bureaux in order to build the resilience of vulnerable and socially excluded groups.

Outcome statement

CAS can report on the actions which have led to policy changes that have impacted on target groups. CAS can report on the impact of services developed in response to the needs of specific target groups.

Indicators

Improved indicators of social and financial capital for specific target groups.

Strategic Aim 5

To develop leadership at all levels of the Citizens Advice Service across Scotland and within CAS itself in order to deliver better services to CAB and other stakeholders and the people of Scotland.

Objectives

1. CAS will promote a culture of value, respect and mutual support and understanding across the service.
2. CAS will encourage leadership and relationships that adhere to the values of the organisation, in particular demonstrating the servant leadership model.
3. CAS will identify and provide support for the development of these leadership models.
4. CAS will promote excellence in open and transparent communication both within CAS and across the wider CAB service.
5. CAS will encourage wider engagement and participation by bureaux in its governance and other relevant consultative processes.

Outcome statement

CAS can report on the impact of the servant leadership model across the CAB service. CAS can report on a broader engagement in its governance structures.

Indicators

Improvement in the outcomes of staff survey

Increase in the numbers of nominations for Board and Standing Committee election

Increase in representation on Board and Committee from bureaux outside the central belt.

Notes

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