

# CITIZENS ADVICE SCOTLAND

## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: 2018 – 2023

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The Citizens Advice network in Scotland is the largest independent advice service in the country. Citizens Advice Scotland is a charity within this network: we act as a national organisation supporting and representing the service as a whole and the interests of citizens.

At the core of the network there are 60 individual Citizens Advice Bureau organisations across Scotland, all operating as independent charities in their own right, and generally focusing on providing support directly to citizens. Each of these organisations is a member of Citizens Advice Scotland. Also providing significant added value are the national elements of the service run out of Citizens Advice Scotland, such as the Extra Help Unit.

### **Our vision and purpose**

Citizens Advice Scotland will help build a fairer society by:

- enhancing and adding value for the Citizens Advice network (which provides free access to quality information and advice for all)
- influencing for positive change

### **Across 2018 – 2023 we will focus on four strategic focus areas:**

1. Funding and income
2. Enabling service delivery
3. Building brand
4. Advocacy and influence

# 1) Funding and income

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We recognise that appropriate funding and income is critical to the success and impact of the whole Citizens Advice network in Scotland, and that we have a key role to play in securing it.

Across 2018-2023 we will:

- **Maximise funding opportunities for the network**  
*Measures: framework / mechanisms exist; identified funding needs met; the network benefits from funding sources it would not otherwise access (x% increase); plan for developing and maintaining network of funders and potential funders exists.*
- **Create sustainable funding models for the network**  
*Measures: x% of network has access to funding for more than one year; network feels more confident about future funding.*
- **Pilot new models and ways of generating income for the network**  
*Measures: x% more new models of income generation piloted; new models deliver x% more funding for network.*
- **Demonstrate the impact of the network to funders to secure future investment**  
*Measures: mechanisms exist; impact is regularly demonstrated; demonstration of impact directly leads to increase in income for network of x%.*
- **Provide the network with expertise and support on income generation**  
*Measures: expertise available when required; network supported via this expertise to access £x income they would not otherwise have.*

## 2) Enabling service delivery

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High quality advice and information should be available for all who need it – and to make that a reality we must work together effectively across the network.

Across 2018-2023 we will:

A. Enhance the services we offer the network by:

- **Providing and enhancing high-quality, effective tools and services, delivered in a shared way where this will increase efficiency**  
*Measures: Members satisfied with available services; services available with minimum downtime; services delivered in a way that delivers savings and increases efficiency.*
- **Respecting and reflecting member differences in service design**  
*Measures: Variety of operating models and contexts across the network are understood and mapped; services are delivered in a way which meets needs of members (x% increase in satisfaction); approval ratings from members improve by x%.*
- **Ensuring consistent and timely internal and external communications on key issues, and with provision for internal peer-to-peer support**  
*Measures: A 25% improvement in communications measures; 80% members recognise and value improved provision of peer-to-peer support.*

B. Enable network to prepare for and invest in the future of service delivery by:

- **Understanding citizens' current and future information and advice needs, and ensuring that the network delivers multi-channel services that meet those needs**  
*Measures: Needs of clients and non-clients regularly assessed and reviewed; network regularly updated on upcoming changes/risks/opportunities, analysis and updates, and recommended changes or action; service delivery reflects and meets needs; network satisfaction rates with this service high; citizen satisfaction rates high.*
- **Develop and expand digital skills across the network**  
*Measures: Digital skills and solutions increase across network.*
- **Implement service design changes and digital channels effectively, where they are required for maximum benefit to the network and to citizens**  
*Measures: mechanisms set up to encourage, explore, identify and implement required changes; changes implemented as a result for benefit of network and citizens.*

C. Maintain and support high quality of advice by:

- **Monitoring and maintaining consistent high quality advice across the network, addressing issues where they arise**  
*Measures: high levels of quality assurance scores across network; network feels supported and encouraged to focus on continuous improvement; relevant tools provided and in use.*

➤ **Promoting the quality of advice provided by the network and ensuring it is recognised externally**

*Measures: mechanisms to ensure quality of advice shared externally in place; approvals from key stakeholders reference quality of advice.*

➤ **Supporting the network to recruit, develop and retain volunteers**

*Measures: candidate numbers increase by 25%; 50% volunteers access development opportunities offered; volunteer retention increase by 25%.*

➤ **Protecting and enhancing the national footprint of the Scottish network**

*Measures: a face-to-face presence in every community in Scotland, supported by high quality telephony and online channels*

### 3) Building brand

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The brand of the Citizens Advice network in Scotland is a valuable asset. We believe it should be protected and that by building it we can provide greater support to the network and to citizens.

Across 2018-2023 we will:

A. Protect and enhance the reputation of the network's brand by:

- › **Developing a brand position and corporate narrative for the network, with positive outcomes for citizens at its core**  
*Measures: network recognised as the leading advice provider in Scotland by citizens and influencers. Positions well (+10 points) for trust, quality, professionalism and independence metrics against others in the market.*
- › **Building awareness and understanding of the work of the network and encouraging engagement in a way that demonstrates its value**  
*Measures: increased awareness / understanding / engagement in the network amongst core client group (40+ C2DE) plus those for whom the service would not be a natural choice (young people / ABC1); increase engagement from those groups by 20% to provide a 'representative' client group.*
- › **Protecting the brand from reputational damage and issues which may diminish trust in the network**  
*Measures: development of a reputation management strategy which identifies and mitigates against risks or issues.*

B. Position the network at the heart of Scotland's volunteering agenda by:

- › **Celebrating the value that the network's volunteers add to citizens, the service and society**  
*Measures: volunteering value is calculated, communicated (outputs) and recognised.*
- › **Becoming a leader in developing Scotland's national volunteering strategy on behalf of the network.**  
*Measures: network is represented and influential at a national level.*

C. Maintain high levels of corporate governance by:

- › **Maintaining our commitment to best practice governance arrangements**  
*Measure: governance review recommendations implemented in full.*
- › **Supporting the network to adopt best practice governance arrangements**  
*Measure: 100% members to adopt best practices for board composition, tenure and recruitment.*
- › **Supporting the network to recruit and retain skilled trustees**  
*Measure: Skilled individuals appointed to key roles and serve full term.*

## 4) Advocacy and influence

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Citizens Advice Scotland acts as a voice for the network in Scotland, influencing decision-makers in the interests of the network as a whole and of citizens.

Across 2018-2023 we will:

- **Bring about change for the benefit of the network and citizens**  
*Measures: Clear, effective mechanisms for identifying priorities for change developed, implemented and measured; influencing work focused on network interests as well as citizens; necessary relationships, action plans and campaigns in place where required to bring about changes; x number of changes brought about.*
- **Speak with a single voice on behalf of the network to improve outcomes for citizens**  
*Measures: Clear mechanisms exist for establishing positions on key issues for the network, and for communicating them. Robust, current data sources.*
- **Support the network to influence effectively to deliver change locally as well as nationally**  
*Measures: Public affairs framework exists; engagement takes place in a structured and co-ordinated fashion; substantial engagement with all political parties with outcomes tracked and reported; support network to influence effectively at a local level where required.*
- **Champion the interests of citizens and consumers**  
*Measures: Recognition from all key stakeholders; relevant interests highlighted and changes brought about.*
- **Embed influencing capacity through the network to deliver maximum impact by:**

  - **Understanding the political landscape and pro-actively building relationships, gathering intelligence, evidence and data relevant to the network**  
*Measures: relevant relationships are mapped, owners assigned with action plans for each.*
  - **Monitoring issues across all relevant external policy areas and developing and adapting the Citizens Advice Scotland position in response, using data from advice provision as key points of evidence**  
*Measures: issues management framework.*
  - **Understanding the implications of policy proposals and being effective influencers for delivering change**  
*Measures: advocacy work achieves specified objectives.*
  - **Deploying effective and appropriate strategies to bring about change**  
*Measures: advocacy work achieves specified objectives, relationships maintained.*