

A time of change and focus

Summary Impact report for the year ending 31 March 2022

Just like the rest of the world, St Pauls Advice Centre and the community have been learning what the 'new normal' looks like since Covid arrived.

A time of change

We continue to offer some services by phone, which can make us more accessible for some people. However, we are so pleased to have also been able to open our doors once again and hear the familiar buzz of conversations taking place that have the potential to change what the future looks like for people in St Pauls and East Bristol.

The changing world has also created new opportunities for several long-standing Trustees and staff members who we have wished a fond farewell to during 2022. We thank them all for their time and commitment to the advice centre. Not least of all Steve, who stepped down in July 2022 after 13 years of providing calm and compassionate leadership as our Director.

A time for focus

Challenges such as the cost-of-living crisis are knocking at our door and client outcomes of increased wellbeing, improved stability and enabled independence are more relevant than ever. We want to build on our 'whole person, whole community' approach and see how the learning from this project could and should influence our broader approach. We continue to challenge ourselves to adapt as needed while ensuring that we remain true to our values, providing client focused expertise with respect and integrity.

Our aim in this approach is to look beyond the 'presenting problem', to get to know people seeking our help, building a relationship of trust so that we can understand their wider family circumstances and provide the advice and support they need to achieve lasting positive change and move forward with their lives.

Almost always this includes providing advice and advocacy in the areas of debt, benefits and immigration, but the focus is on hearing from the client what matters to them most. Our hope is that this approach will enable us to move away from the traditional 'revolving door' of advice provision to an approach that builds on the strengths of our clients to develop financial resilience and grow in stability and independence.

Our Advocato Volunteer Project also continued into its fourth year. The team were able to help 45 clients with form filling for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and other benefits vital for disabled people or those who are long term sick and secured £38,152 in Benefit payments.

Our Advocato volunteers are a key part of how we work as they are able to spend time alongside our clients, building relationships with them and supporting them to make essential applications whilst also freeing up advisor capacity.

**Helen Siphthorp (Trustees)
and Rob France (Director)**



Our impact in numbers



We helped 497 people and advised them on 760 legal issues



92% of clients felt they were given information that was easy to understand



47% of clients are over 50, and 15% are over 65



Advocato volunteers secured €34,132 in Benefit payments.



94% of clients would recommend our service to others

"Just keep what you are doing - it is of great help"



We increased household incomes by €430,000



28% of clients described themselves as disabled or long term sick



78% of clients felt they had a better understanding of their legal rights*



73% of clients said they felt they were struggling some or all of the time

"Your team were amazing and very informative"



15% of clients who came to us had mental health concerns



6% of clients were homeowners



23% of clients were in full or part-time employment



72% of clients were from local BAME communities

We are grateful to our funders for their continuing support to achieve these outcomes.

146 Grosvenor Road, St Pauls, Bristol BS2 8YA Tel 0117 955 2981

Email enquiry@stpaulsAdvice.org.uk @stpaulsAdvice /stpaulsAdvice

Reg. Charity No: 1083010. Ltd Co. 03920535. OISC Reg. No. N20040032

www.stpaulsAdvice.org.uk

Advocato case study

James is in his 80s, he and his wife had been struggling with money for a number of years. In 2017, they applied for Pension Credit but this was refused as their income was 80 pence a week too high.

James's health got worse in 2017 and his wife started caring for him. In 2021 they approached a local advice centre to ask about Attendance Allowance. That advice centre signposted him to us for help applying. One of our Advocato volunteers helped him fill in his application form. 8 weeks later, James was awarded the highest rate, an extra £89 a week in income plus £700 in backdated benefit.

After getting Attendance Allowance, one of our adviser checked his benefits and worked out that, because his wife was now entitled to benefits as a carer, they could get Pension Credit of £12 a week. Furthermore, as his wife has disabilities herself, she could claim Attendance Allowance and, if this were awarded, they'd get an even higher amount of Pension Credit.

"It's wonderful to think that there are people out there who can help. I can't thank you enough. Getting your advice and support has really turned things around for us."