

Argyll & Bute Citizens Advice Bureau Community Planning Partnerships Update Spring 2022

Argyll & Bute CAB has continued to service communities across Argyll & Bute throughout the COVID pandemic and is now experiencing a high number of enquiries from clients looking for a range of advice topics. Welfare rights and housing enquiries constitute a large degree of advisers workload, however debt and in particular energy debt is an increasing theme for a greater percentage of our clients. As a result we have obtained funding to increase our debt support with a part-time energy debt specialist employed to support the workload.

Her Majesty's Court & Tribunals Services have communicated that they will recommence face to face sessions from 4th April and we have started to see an increase in numbers of clients looking for support to avoid evictions as a result also.

Our advisers are reporting a large increase in the numbers of clients reporting complex or multifaceted issues and an increase in mental health issues as a result. We are actively looking at funding opportunities to support vulnerable clients in these situations.

The bureau has begun its Spring 2022 Adviser training programme and has a target of recruiting 12 volunteer advisers each year – the next intake will be late summer 2022. All our volunteers are continuing to work remotely for the most part with advisers covering the entirety of Argyll & Bute.

We are currently running a consultation exercise with partner organisations in order to review the work of the bureau and would welcome CPP attendee's responses to this <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ABCABCommunityPartnersSurvey/>

The bureau has been carrying out a small piece of research recently into the private rental housing market across Argyll & Bute and hopes to have the report on the impact of this sector on communities available early April for dissemination to partners.