

# Citizens Advice Service

**Kathy Kentish**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Citizens Advice South Essex**



# Citizens Advice Service

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- **Where are we in Thurrock**
- **How to contact Citizens Advice**
- **Channels of service delivery**
- **Specialist services**
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# Citizens Advice Service

- Each local Citizens Advice is an independent charity, raising its own funding
- 259 local Citizens Advice in England & Wales
- Citizens Advice South Essex covers Basildon, Billericay, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rayleigh, Rochford, Thurrock & Wickford
- 10 local Citizens Advice in Essex
- Members of national Citizens Advice
- Brand recognised and trusted by the public
- Free, impartial, non-judgemental and confidential
- Available to all
- Huge demand & need



# Citizens Advice Service

- **2 main elements to the service:**
  - 1. Providing Information, Advice, Guidance & Advocacy to all about almost any subject**
  - 2. Research & Campaigns**



# Citizens Advice Service

## Research & Campaigns:

- To improve practices & policies that affect people unfairly.

Currently campaigning for a gas and electricity social tariff and better protection for consumers against forced change to prepayment meters.

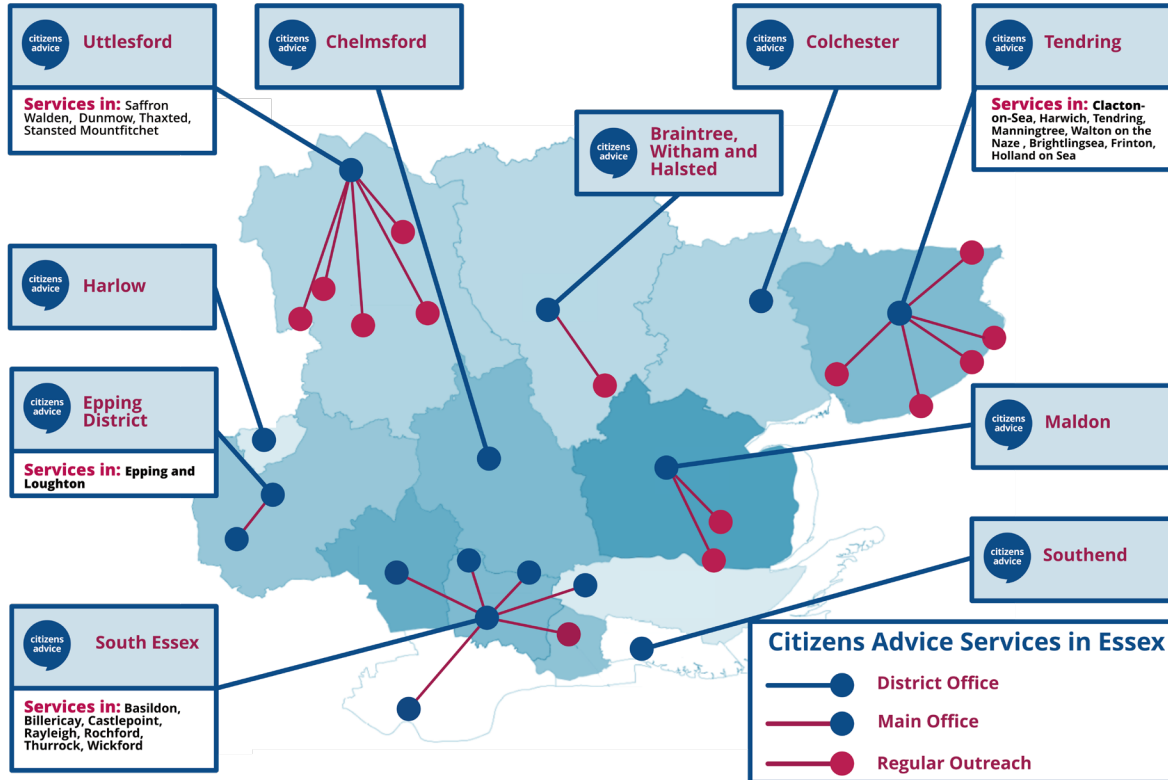


# Citizens Advice Service

- **High quality**
- **2 Quality Marks:**
  - **The Advice Quality Standard**
  - **The Money Advice Quality Framework**
- **Registered with the Financial Conduct Authority**



# Citizens Advice in Essex



[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

Public site to find your nearest local Citizens Advice

# Citizens Advice Service

- **Grays – Wednesday mornings**  
**9.30am to 12noon**  
**The Beehive Resource Centre, West St, Grays RM17 6XP**
- **Corringham Library – Wednesdays**  
**10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm**
- **Planning to open for more sessions when we have enough volunteers!**





# Citizens Advice Service

- **Core Services - multi channel:**
  - **Online public website – [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)**
  - **Local websites e.g**
  - **[www.citizensadvicesouthessex.org](http://www.citizensadvicesouthessex.org)**
  - **Telephone – e.g South Essex Freephone 0808 278 7877**
  - **Email – national and local**
  - **Webchat**
  - **Video**
  - **Face to face sessions**



# Local Service

**Citizens Advice in South Essex 20,000 clients a year.  
(Thurrock 2500 clients a year)**

**Our main enquiry areas are:**

- **Debt**
- **Welfare Benefits**
- **Energy Advice**
- **Housing**
- **Relationships**
- **Employment**
- **Legal**



# Local Service

## Example cases:

- £2,000 grant from EDF to help clear utility debts
- £37,000 debts, mainly credit cards, incurred during the pandemic, client assisted with bankruptcy

## General cases:

- Helping people navigate Council homeless and housing applications
- Help to apply for benefits e.g Attendance Allowance (£68.10 or £101.75 per week)



# Attendance Allowance

**You need to be over pension age and have supervision and care needs because of an illness or disability.**

**Need to meet the DWP's 'disability test'.**

- 1.attention from another person or**
- 2.supervision from another person or**
- 3.another person to watch over them**



# Pension Credit

- **2 parts, Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit. You might get one or both.**
- **Guarantee Credit tops up your weekly income to a minimum amount.**
- **Examples £201.05 (Single) £306.85 (Couples)**
- **Amount is affected by savings and disabilities**
- **Savings Credit is a small top-up for people who have a modest amount of income or savings. It's only available if you reached State Pension age before 6 April 2016.**

## Other benefits include:

- **State Pension**
- **Council Tax Support (low income/ on pension credit)**
- **Council Tax Discount (often 25% single occupier)**
- **Winter Fuel Payment (born before 26/9/56/ low income)**
- **Warm Home Discount (pension credit/ low income)**
- **Energy Bills Support Schemes**
- **Bereavement benefits**

# Citizens Advice – Additional Services

## Macmillan

**Specialist welfare benefits advice service to help people cope with the financial impact of a cancer diagnosis.**

### Self Referral & Partner referral forms:

<https://citizensadviceessex.org.uk/macmillan>

**Or call 0300 373 0952**



# Citizens Advice – Additional Services

## Help To Claim

- **Support to apply for Universal Credit**
  - \* Check eligibility/ calculation
  - \* Complete application
  - \* Check 1<sup>st</sup> payment
- **Telephone 0800 144 8444 & Webchat**

## Pensionwise

- **Guidance to make informed pension decisions**
  - \* Aged 50 and over
  - \* Defined Contribution Pension





# Citizens Advice – Additional Services

Consumer Service: 0808 223 1133

**Practical and impartial advice on how to resolve consumer issues**

**Information about Consumer law**

**Pass information about complaints on to Trading Standards  
(you can't do this yourself)**



# Citizens Advice Service

- Core information and advice service
- Specialist services vary depending on location:
- Specialist debt advice funded by the Money Advice and Pension service
- Fuel poverty alleviation projects – specifically “Warm Start” & “Warm Homes”
- Income maximisation/welfare benefits including specialist appeals work
- Specialist immigration and housing advice



# South Essex Law Clinic

- South Essex Law clinic – pro bono legal advice on the phone
- 30 minutes free
- Employment, Housing, Relationships, Civil matters, Wills & Probate
- Can request an appointment with Citizens Advice locally, or
- Request online direct with the Law Clinic:  
<https://southessexlawclinic.com/v2/>
- Drop in Face-to-Face Housing Law Clinic – Basildon on Friday mornings



# Cost of Living Crisis

**Local Citizens Advice may have Fuel Voucher Schemes**

**Information on our public website, includes:**

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/get-help-with-the-cost-of-living/>

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/grants-and-benefits-to-help-you-pay-your-energy-bills/>

# Citizens Advice Service

- **Volunteers – recruiting now!**
- **To do more in Thurrock we need more volunteers**
- **No previous experience required**
- **Comprehensive training**
- **Volunteer roles include Assessors, Information Assistants, Receptionists, Advisers**
- **Supported by a core team of including trainers, supervisors & managers.**
- **National Citizens Advice training**
- **Application pack available**  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or local website  
[www.citizensadvicesouthessex.org](http://www.citizensadvicesouthessex.org)  
or leave a voicemail on 01277 358081



# Citizens Advice Service

## Summary:

- Citizens Advice Services
- [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
- Campaigning for improvements/ change
- Volunteering (01277 358081)

Any Questions?

