

## Glasgow Citizens Advice Bureaux

Bridgeton CAB  
Castlemilk CAB  
Central CAB  
Drumchapel CAB  
Easterhouse CAB  
Glasgow North West CAB  
Greater Pollok CAB  
Parkhead CAB

citizens  
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bureau

## Glasgow CABx newsletter – September 2023

This September edition continues our focus on outreach projects and partnership working.



## Good advice prevents crisis

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cost of living is affecting their clients. Demand for advice has risen rapidly but it is the type of help sought which illustrates the depth of current problems. Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) gathers data from the 59 bureaux throughout Scotland. This shows that there is a large cross over between those seeking advice on utilities and food insecurity. The partnership which Glasgow Bureaux already have with local foodbanks has been strengthened by a new project which aims to reduce the need for food parcels by referring people for advice.

### Trussel Trust , Glasgow Helps and GAIN Working in Partnership

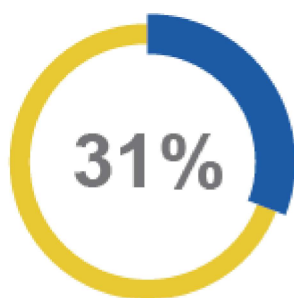
It is a collaboration between the Trussell Trust, Glasgow Helps and members of the Glasgow Advice and Information Network (GAIN), of which all Glasgow CABx are members. People who phone Glasgow Helps are assessed and if they require advice can be referred to GAIN members.

David Brownlee, the Financial Inclusion Lead for Trussell Trust explains:

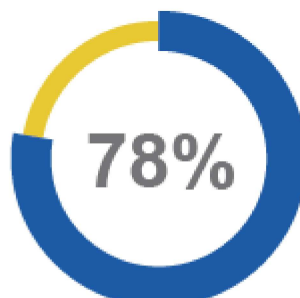
***“Advice is very important to avoid crisis use of food banks... we know that good advice will reduce the need for food parcels”.***

The project is being piloted for two years and there is ongoing evaluation to assess progress.

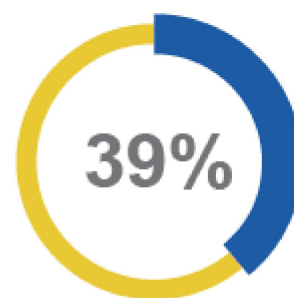
### Evidence from Citizens Advice Scotland



of out of work clients needed food security advice.



of those seeking utilities advice also needed help with debts.



of non-pensioner single households also needed food insecurity advice.

### Michael's Story

Michael\* was referred to the CAB via Glasgow Helps and the Trussell Trust project. Recently Michael assumed care of his 7 year old child. As a jobseeker, he had previously claimed Universal Credit (UC) but his benefits had stopped when he had taken up a short term job for a month. Michael was entitled to cost of living payments for the time that he had spent on UC but the DWP claimed that there was no proof of his having received benefit, despite Michael

despair. The CAB adviser carried out a full benefits check and helped Michael to claim child benefit, additional UC payments in recognition that he is now a full-time carer for his child, Scottish child payment and a council tax reduction. As a result of the referral for CAB help, Michael is £140.80 a week better off. Over one year the additional benefits and backdated monies will amount to a total client financial gain of £7,321; money that will be spent boosting Glasgow's local economy.

· \*All names are fictitious to protect confidentiality.



## Breaking the Cycle of Re-offending- Helping Prisoners and their Families

***“With the right tools and support ...people are more equipped to make better choices, have a better quality of life and become positive contributors to society”*** says Victoria, the Training Officer in Parkhead CAB's Barlinnie Prison project.

For some 20 years Parkhead CAB has been offering a service to prisoners and their families. This year, with a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, a new and innovative project started. Advice and information on welfare benefits, debt and housing is vital to help prisoners retain their homes and stand a better chance of re-settling in the community and making a fresh start. The new money has allowed the CAB to double the resources devoted to advice sessions but also to deliver

workshops in the Hub that prisoners visit during recreation time. Topics covered include: housing, family support, goal setting and creating positive habits, budgeting and credit reports.

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***“Great workshop. Extremely informative. Helpful information for release and budgeting.”***

(Budgeting workshop participant)

### Stewart's Story

It was Stewart's first time in prison. He was extremely worried about whether he would lose the house that he had lived in for 17 years. The prison officer got in touch with Chad, the CAB adviser working in Barlinnie, who negotiated on Stewart's behalf with his landlord to secure the tenancy agreement. In the interview, Chad also discovered that Stewart could not access his bank account because he had no family in the community to help him and not having a job in the prison he had no money. Chad was also able to assist with this issue again by negotiating on his behalf. Stewart was 'very relieved' saying 'it was a weight of his mind' but the prison officer who had referred him also commented that 'the hall runs smoother when prisoners feel they are getting some help'.

In the first six months the new project advised 203 prisoners on 1010 different issues and delivered 111 workshop sessions. Working with partners in the prison, the project also delivered employability and creative writing programmes. A further phase of the project will involve training volunteer peer mentors to provide triage-style support to fellow inmates. Access to a CAB adviser will still be available but the training will empower the peer mentors to help others to manage some problems on their own. The skills gained through the training will enable them to engage with volunteering opportunities post release. As the case study below shows, the CAB project is strengthened by working in partnership with other criminal justice organisations.

### Beyond the Gate- Partnership Work

John had addiction and mental health problems. Towards the end of his sentence he attended several CAB workshops and also began to engage with SPS staff in the Wellbeing Centre which improved his confidence. But he was very worried about how he would cope with his addiction when he left prison. The CAB staff worked with John on the steps outlined in 'Beyond the Gate' – a guide designed with the prisoners to list the tasks that can be actioned while still in prison and post release in the community. John was referred to 'Hope Connections' a partner organisation who arranged a place in a rehabilitation centre for him and met him on the day of his release. A couple of months later John sent a 'thumbs up' picture – he wanted everyone to know that he is 'doing really well'.

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