

## **Background Information on South West Aberdeenshire Citizens Advice Bureau**

South West Aberdeenshire CAB is an accredited member of the national network of CABx, the Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, also known as Citizens Advice Scotland. We are a local charity and company limited by guarantee, governed by local volunteer Board members.

We cover over 40% of Aberdeenshire from our Westhill office base, with further offices in Banchory and Aboyne. We deliver appointment-only outreach services in Aboyne, Alford, Ballater, Braemar, Strathdon and Tarland and are currently establishing new outreach services in Kintore and Kemnay. We provide home visit appointments to clients who are geographically isolated, are limited by medical condition or have caring responsibilities.

We are project-funded by a range of Trusts and funding initiatives through grant-funding like the Henry Smith Trust and by local consortium contracts. We also operate national contracts through Citizens Advice Scotland, including Pensionwise, SSEN Energy Project, the Gambling Support Service, Help to Claim (Universal Credit), the Money Talk Team and the Patient Advice and Support Scheme.

We currently employ 6 full-time and 9 part-time members of staff and who support our invaluable team of over 50 volunteers in a wide variety of roles. Our service has developed from 2 volunteer advisers to over 30 since 2008 and from 500 client issues to an estimated 16,000 this current year.

Our services are based on the core principles of Citizens Advice Scotland - free, confidential, impartial, locally relevant, independent and quality-assured.

We provide confidential advice, help, advocacy and information on, for example, Benefits, Bereavement, Consumer Issues, Employment, Form-Filling, Homelessness, Housing, Legal issues, Pensions, Personal Debt, Personal Tax Procedures and Relationship Issues. An accredited training system is at the heart of the operation to support service provision.

The Bureau offers a service mix of drop-in and appointment-only generalist advice in both Westhill and Banchory; appointment-only specialist service provision for more complex or specialised advice throughout the operating area and appointment-only outreach services.