



Press Release

Citizens Advice Telford & the Wrekin begins the journey out of lockdown.

Summary: Citizens Advice Telford and the Wrekin has announced today that it is taking the first steps towards offering face-to-face help for people who cannot access services in any other way. From Monday people who are in an emergency situation can get help safely whilst preserving social distancing. The charity can be contacted by phone on 0300 330 1165 or 01952 567193 or 567173 or by email on case@telfordcab.co.uk.

Detail: In line with other services, local charity Citizens Advice Telford and the Wrekin will continue to do most of its work online, by email and via the telephone. When lock-down started the charity quickly put more phonelines in place and an email service, staffed by dedicated volunteers and advice staff working from home. Knowing not everyone can access information and advice via a computer or phone, people with emergencies will be able to get more help from Monday 22nd June.

Citizens Advice Telford & the Wrekin's CEO Caro Hart explained:

"We know that not everyone can access help using technology and so from Monday people in an emergency can contact us, or get help from someone else to contact us, to make an appointment to come in to our offices at Tan Bank in Wellington. We can then put them in front of a computer and a phone so that they can talk to one of our advisers about their problem. In an emergency situation we can also help people needing a food parcel or other practical support.

"At present we don't know when we will be returning to a drop-in service at Tan Bank or our community outreach services, but we will be putting regular updates on our website www.citizensadvice.telfordandthewrekin.org.uk. People can ring us on 0300 330 1165 or local numbers 01952 567193 or 567173. They can also contact us by email on case@telfordcab.co.uk or by writing to us at 40 Tan Bank, Wellington TF1 1HW"

The organisation has full safety arrangements in place; with social distancing, hand sanitising facilities and regular cleaning to keep both staff and clients safe.

The charity is anticipating a "tsunami" of problems when lock-down ends as people need to resume payments after payment holidays, or lose their jobs as businesses go under. The biggest areas of work are debts and benefits and they have specialist advisers who can help with these problems. The service is free, confidential, impartial and independent.

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WORD LENGTH 410

EMBARGOED UNTIL 18TH JUNE 2020

Charity number 1077566 Company number 03844929

Notes to editors:

1. **In response to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic and in order to remain within government guidelines, Citizens Advice Telford & the Wrekin have closed their drop-in and appointment services at 40 Tan Bank and their community outreach services. However, they remain committed to offering a service to the people of Telford & the Wrekin and will still offer advice and information online, by telephone, email and by letter.**
2. Citizens Advice Telford & the Wrekin is an independent local charity, mainly funded locally, to address the needs of the communities of Telford & the Wrekin. It receives no government or statutory funding.
3. We are affiliated to the national charity Citizens Advice and part of the network of independent local Citizens Advice charities across England and Wales; the Citizens Advice consumer service; and the Witness Service.
4. We offer help that is free, confidential, impartial and independent.
5. We help more than 11,000 people per year with 21,000 problems, face-to-face and by telephone.
6. Citizens Advice Telford & the Wrekin is open at its premises in Wellington five days per week (until 7pm on a Tuesday) for general enquiries, and help is available by appointment at First Point, Southwater every day. It also has outreach services in Newport, Madeley, Dawley, Stirchley, Oakengates, Hadley, Leegomery and Woodside.
7. Our services are delivered by over 70 volunteers and 30 paid staff.
8. The top issues people ask us about are benefits, including Universal Credit, debts, housing and employment.
9. As well as general information and advice at our offices in Tan Bank and community outreaches, we have a range of other services:
 - a. Debt advice and casework support
 - b. Help to Claim for Universal Credit Claimants which is available at the Job Centre Plus in Telford five half-days per week and has outreach sessions in Brookside and Sutton Hill.
 - c. Helping Hands for people with a financial crisis who are vulnerable with mental ill-health or homeless.
 - d. Strengthening Families working with the support workers for families with complex needs.
 - e. The Armed Forces Covenant Project runs two drop-in information hubs for people who are serving, have served, and their families.
 - f. Energy advice and information; switch and save offers talks and 1:1 appointments.
 - g. The domestic and emotional abuse project is helping to increase awareness about all forms of domestic and emotional abuse.
 - h. The UP UP Project - a school Uniform Bank
 - i. Digital Inclusion project – computer training for people so that they can access essential services
10. We campaign on issues that affect local people such as loan sharks and scams.

Our website is www.citizensadvicetelfordandthewrekin.org.uk

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