

# Citizens Advice

Autumn 2021

[newforestcab.org.uk](http://newforestcab.org.uk)

## Dame Clare Moriarty thanks our fantastic New Forest Team

'A huge thank you' that was the message from the new CEO of National Citizens Advice to all our volunteers, staff and trustees who attended a thank you event hosted by CANF patron Lady Montagu at Palace House, Beaulieu in August.

The event was the first opportunity the charity had to get everyone together to celebrate all the hard work our staff and volunteers have put in over this difficult period.

Dame Clare Moriarty was the guest of honour and made the keynote speech which talked about the different problems Citizens Advice faced at a

local and national level, how COVID impacted the public, what the ongoing support plans are, and plans for the future. Plenty of praise was given to all of the team for the continued effort throughout the pandemic, helping over 5,000 people with 14,000 issues.

As someone new to the organisation she talked about its dual roles, helping people move forward with their problems whilst using this unique insight to influence policies and practices. She spoke about the challenges facing people as some of the Covid support measures are lifted such as the evictions ban, £20 uplift in Universal Credit and furlough scheme. It is set to create a perfect storm for lower income households and she predicted an increasing need for Citizens Advice services in the months and years ahead.



**TESCO**  
Community Grants

### Citizens Advice New Forest Needs Your Vote

CANF are bidding for a cash boost from the Tesco Community Grants initiative, working with Groundwork, a charity running its funding scheme.

Our project is to support New Forest Food Larders. The work we do alongside the larders is invaluable as an outreach facility helping signpost those in the community most in need of advice and support.

Voting is in October, November and December and customers can cast their vote using a token given to them at the check-out.

- Lymington Metro SO41 9AP
- New Milton Store BH25 6BP
- Pennington Express SO41 8GN
- Lyndhurst Express SO43 7BH
- Brockenhurst Express SO42 7RB
- Old Milton Rd Express BH25 6DN
- Highcliffe Express BH23 5HD
- Blackfield Express SO45 1WE
- Dibden Purlieu Express SO45 5GT
- Hythe Superstore SO45 5JA
- Hythe Langdown Express SO45 5GS





# On the road with Citizens Advice

During the pandemic our outreach work has been increasingly important, so we were very pleased to be able to attend the Connect4Communities family festivals in Ringwood, Hythe and Totton over the summer.

We know that people are always interested in the price of food, so we decided to share some of the results from the Cost of Living survey that we have been carrying out with Southampton University. Our research has shown a £20+ difference between a 20 item everyday shopping list that our researchers priced at 35 stores across the New Forest. The same basket of goods ranged from £16 to £38. Many people were shocked at this vast difference and were then encouraged to take part in our Cost of Living Survey and share their



experiences of living in the New Forest on a low income. We will be reporting on the full findings in October .

Our food basket activity linked well to our partnership project with Fareshare where one of our workers supports the 10 New Forest food larders across the region. The Fareshare van attended the festivals, and we ran a free pop-up food larder to show people how they worked and handed out our new Tell A Friend cards so people could find their nearest food larder.

To find your nearest food-larder scan here for more details:



# Help with Water Bills

After the success of our winter energy campaign (we helped 126 families with energy vouchers totaling over £24,000) we turned our attention to other utility bills and have teamed up with Southern Water's Vulnerable Customers Officer Stuart Bailey to promote schemes that can help customers save money on their water bills.



Stuart explains *'It's great to be working in partnership with the New Forest Citizens Advice. Southern Water have been visiting a number of local food larders in the area to help and support low income households by offering financial assistance tariffs and discounts, as well as providing*

**We don't want you to worry about your water bill**

We have assistance available that could help:

- Essentials** Provides a discount on your future bills.
- WaterSure** Caps your bills if you have a water meter, are on means-tested benefits and meet other criteria.
- Water Direct** Jobcentre Plus may consider paying an initial amount directly from your benefits on your behalf.
- NewStart** Could help pay off your debt.

Find out how we can help you pay less for your water:  
 email: [payless@southernwater.co.uk](mailto:payless@southernwater.co.uk)  
 web: [southernwater.co.uk/payless](http://southernwater.co.uk/payless)

**Water for Life**  
 Southern Water

*free goody bags including water efficiency items, and preventing blockages caused by fat, oil and grease. Food larders are a great way to reach out to people.'*

If you would like more information on saving money on your Water Bills, please scan the QR code which will direct you to a video from Southern Water explaining all their priority services.



# Employment Advice

## Ask the Experts

*During the pandemic employment help has been the top issue that people have come to us for advice. We have assisted 870 clients with 1,935 employment related issues. We caught up with our expert employment advisers to get their thoughts and reflections on some of the issues that have emerged.*



**During Covid, we have helped 870 clients with 1,935 employment related issues**

### How we helped Mary to understand her employment rights

*Mary is an example of one of the people we helped during the pandemic.*

Mary rang Citizens Advice New Forest seeking help after having problems with her employer. Prior to the pandemic she had been with the company for over 15 years and had no previous problems. She explains, 'It was a total shock, I just didn't know what to do or what my rights were'.

Citizens Advice New Forest have a specialist employment adviser and he was able to work with Mary over several months to help her communicate with her employer to work out a way forward. Mary explains 'Citizens Advice helped me understand my rights and make an appeal against my employer. They gave me the tools I needed and the confidence to use them, and supported me through the appeal process, which resulted in compensation equivalent to one years salary.'

**Q What do you think are some top tips for the younger generation when going into new employment? What should they make sure to look out for?**

Young people should check that their contract of employment matches any discussions/written offer of employment. This is particularly the case where working hours and/or days are unspecified or "as required". They should also be clear about the implications of waiving any rights under the Working Time Directive Regulations.

**Q How do you think the pandemic has affected how people work and are there ways you think employers may take advantage of these changes? If so, what advice can you give around this?**

There appears to be two clear changes that people are experiencing as a consequence of the pandemic: Home working and flexibility of working hours. They typically affect different groups of workers and different sectors but they are issues that employers and employees will have to address for the foreseeable future as we try to get to the "new normal".

Employers in the hospitality industry are clearly using the challenges of covid compliance to try to leverage even more flexibility from their employees.

Office based workers have tended to default to the "work from home" protocol but within organisations this can vary from one job or individual to another. Managing people's expectations (and treating employees equitably) as we return to a level of normality, will be a great challenge for employers and employees.

# Local Offices

As a national and local service, we understand the importance of being available when clients need our help, so during the pandemic it was important that we looked at different ways to be contacted. As a result, we can now be contacted more easily than before.

Our staff and volunteers are now back in their offices, so if you need to speak with a member of our team please call us on 0808 278 7860. Most issues can be dealt with over the phone but in some cases where a face-to-face meeting is needed, please phone first to arrange an appointment as currently there is no drop-in service available.



Lymington	Town Hall, Avenue Road, Lymington SO41 9ZG
Totton	91 Junction Road Totton, Southampton SO40 3BU
Hythe	The Grove, 25 St Johns Street, Hythe, Southampton SO45 6BZ
Ringwood	Ringwood Library, Christchurch Road, Ringwood BH24 1DW
New Milton	1 Old Milton Road, New Milton BH25 6DQ (Opening soon)

*Our staff and volunteers are working back in the offices. We are delighted to be working in our recently refurbished Totton office alongside It's Your Choice, a charity working with young people across the New Forest.*



## Contact Us

### By Phone: (New Forest Advisers)

Ring our Freephone Adviceline  
0808 278 7860

Monday - Friday

### Email: (New Forest Advisers)

Fill in the online webform @  
[newforestcab.org.uk/contact-us/](http://newforestcab.org.uk/contact-us/)  
[email-adviceline](mailto:email-adviceline@newforestcab.org.uk)

### Webchat: (National Service)

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/  
about-us/contact-us/contact-us/  
web-chat-service/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/web-chat-service/)

### National Citizens Advice:

0800 144 8848

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

*We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.*

*Company Limited by guarantee, registered at Companies House No 06983394.*

*Charity registered with the Charities Commission, Registered Charity No. 1132425*

*Printed and published by New Forest Citizens Advice Bureau on 01/06/2021*

Follow us on Twitter  
[@CABNewForest](https://twitter.com/CABNewForest)

