

Portishead Town Council Report 2021-22



Portishead Generalist Advice Service

Pre-pandemic

2019-20

A face-to-face drop in advice service from 10 am to 4 pm took place one day a week at The Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead.

- 58% helped in person
- 24% helped via email
- 14% helped via telephone (including Adviceline)

Pandemic

2020-21

All CANS face-to-face advice services closed with volunteers and paid staff deployed to home working. The majority of clients have been helped through remote advice (telephone, email, webchat and video conferencing). In June 2020 CANS reintroduced face-to-face advice for the most vulnerable and those unable to access advice remotely. The number of Portishead residents dropped by 24% with the biggest drop impacting clients in need of debt advice

- 68% helped via telephone (including Adviceline)
- 33% helped via email
- 1% helped in person

2021-22 (YTD)

In light of the various restrictions and lockdowns, CANS continued to operate a remote advice service with face-to-face advice being limited for those most in need. The number of clients helped in 2021-22 (figures YTD) has dropped but the complexity indicator has increased, suggesting that we are dealing with fewer clients but spending more time with them because their needs are more complex.

- 47% helped via telephone (including Adviceline)
- 51% helped via email
- 2% helped in person

Portishead Client Numbers

Issue	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Unique clients	351	270	210
Issues	1245	897	907
Complexity Indicator	3.5	3.3	4.3

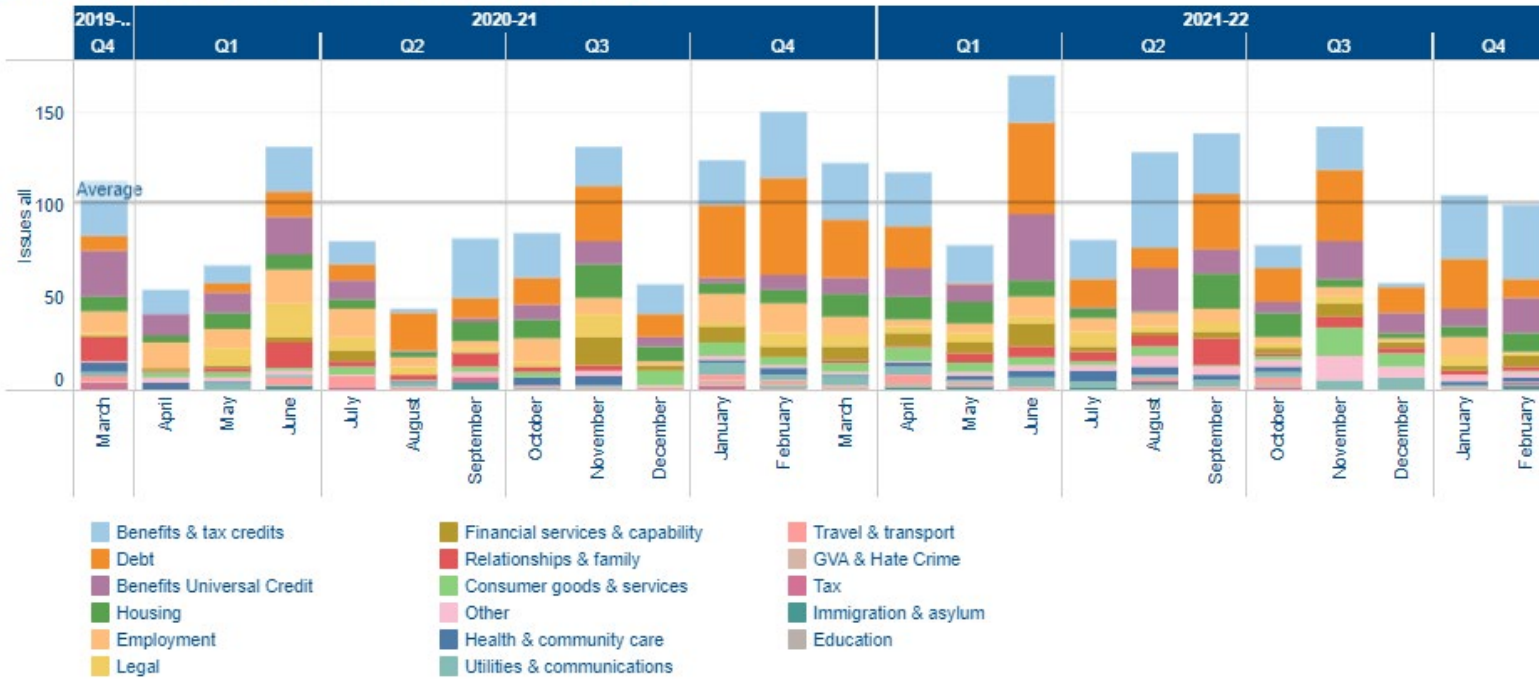
The Top issues for Portishead residents are:

Issue	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Welfare Benefits and Universal Credit	391	220	360
Debt	147	33	175
Housing	85	52	81
Employment	33	49	41
Relationship & Family	67	20	43
Legal	37	37	36

North Somerset Client Numbers

Issue	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Unique clients	10,667	7,405	4,954
Issues	27,043	21,077	20,072
Complexity Indicator	2.5	2.8	4

Graph of issues for last period and previous period



Last year (12 months from report date)

	2020-21		2021-22												Grand Total
	Q4	Q1				Q2			Q3			Q4			
	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February			
Benefits & tax credits	15	13	11	13	11	16	12	6	9	2	15	16	111		
Debt	6	8	1	9	7	3	8	7	9	8	10	6	41		
Benefits Universal Credit	7	5	5	7	1	7	6	2	8	4	4	6	53		
Housing	4	4	7	4	3	1	5	6	3	1	2	4	41		
Employment	4	1	4	2	3	3	2	2	4	1	3	1	27		
Financial services & capability	2	5	3	5	2	2	4	2	3	3	2	2	28		
Relationships & family	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	1	5	1	2	1	24		
Consumer goods & services	4	4	4	1	2	2	1	2	4	4	1	1	26		
Legal	3	2	3	2	4	3	3	2	3	1	2	1	28		
Other	1	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	9	3	4	2	25		
Utilities & communications	3	3	1	4	2	1	2	2	2	4	1	1	18		
Health & community care	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1			2	2	14		
Travel & transport	1	4		1		1	1	2					9		
GVA & Hate Crime	1	2	1					1			1		5		
Immigration & asylum		1	1		1	1		1				2	4		
Tax	1		1			1		1	1				6		
Education				1	1	1	1						3		
Grand Total	35	35	28	29	31	34	35	30	38	19	31	31	254		

Advice Trends
Portishead

Portishead 2021-22 YTD

Key Statistics

Citizens Advice North Somerset (member)

01/04/2021 04/03/2022

citizens
advice

Summary

Clients 210

Quick client contacts

Issues 907

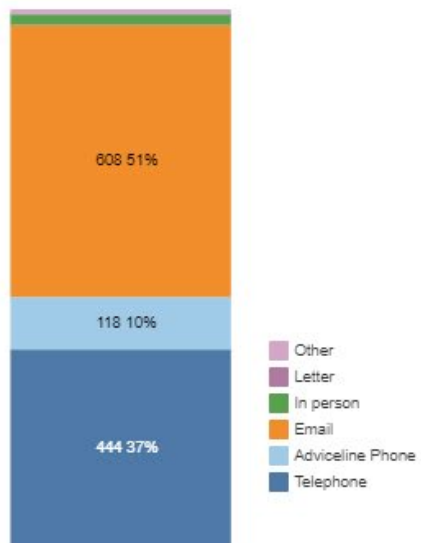
Activities 1,203

Cases 242

Outcomes

Income gain	£98,080
Re-imbursments, services, loans	£7,325
Repayments rescheduled	£2,790
Other	£730

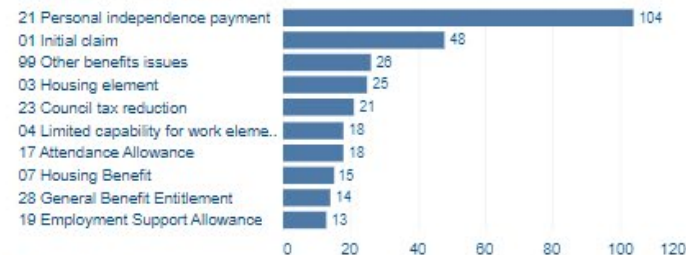
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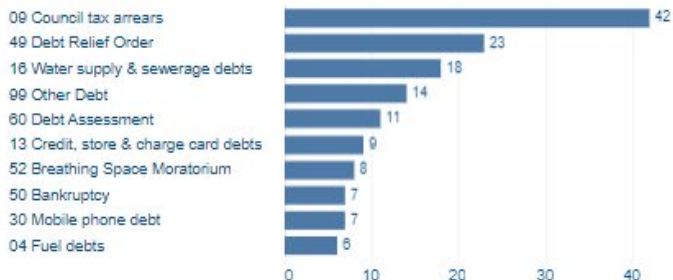
Issues

Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	88
Benefits Universal Credit	40
Consumer goods & services	14
Debt	35
Education	3
Employment	18
Financial services & capability	16
GVA & Hate Crime	4
Health & community care	12
Housing	34
Immigration & asylum	4
Legal	22
Other	22
Relationships & family	19
Tax	4
Travel & transport	8
Utilities & communications	15
Grand Total	907

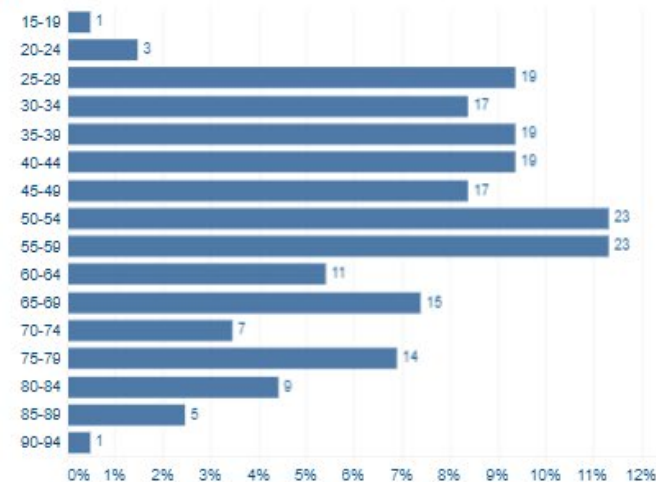
Top benefit issues



Top debt issues



Age



Gender



Disability / Long-term health



Ethnicity



Portishead 2020-21

Key Statistics

Citizens Advice North Somerset (member)

01/04/2020 31/03/2021



Summary

Clients **270**

Quick client contacts

Issues **897**

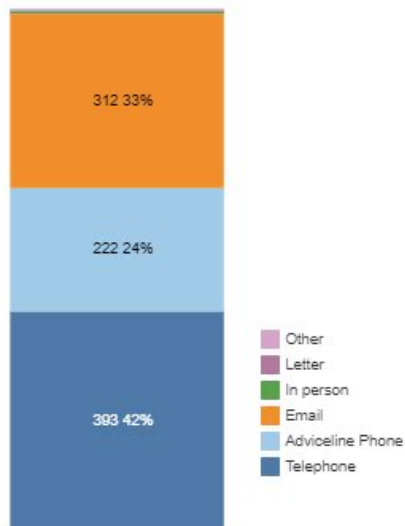
Activities **936**

Cases **303**

Outcomes

Income gain	£75,642
Debts written off	£10,000
Repayments rescheduled	£4,189
Other	£1,095

Channel



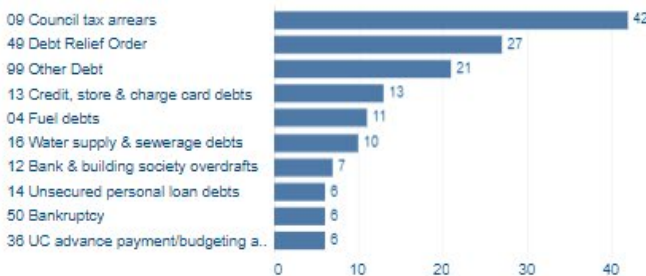
Issues

Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	80
Benefits Universal Credit	37
Consumer goods & services	19
Debt	32
Education	3
Employment	49
Financial services & capability	20
GVA & Hate Crime	4
Health & community care	12
Housing	52
Immigration & asylum	4
Legal	37
Other	15
Relationships & family	19
Tax	5
Travel & transport	13
Utilities & communications	12
Grand Total	897

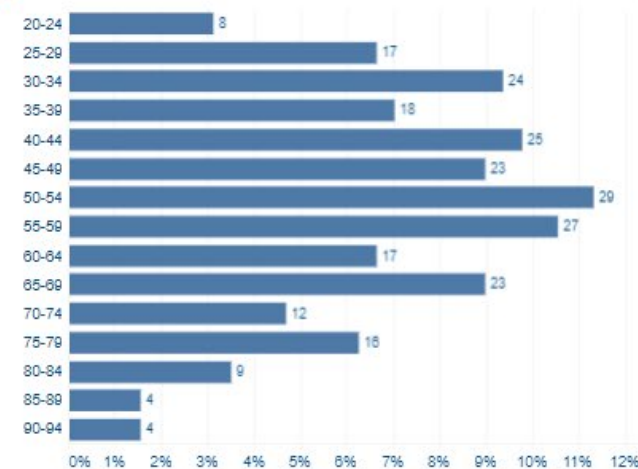
Top benefit issues



Top debt issues



Age



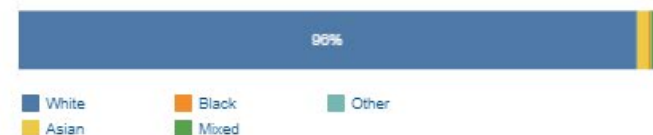
Gender



Disability / Long-term health



Ethnicity



Portishead 2019-20

Key Statistics

Citizens Advice North Somerset (member)

01/04/2019 31/03/2020



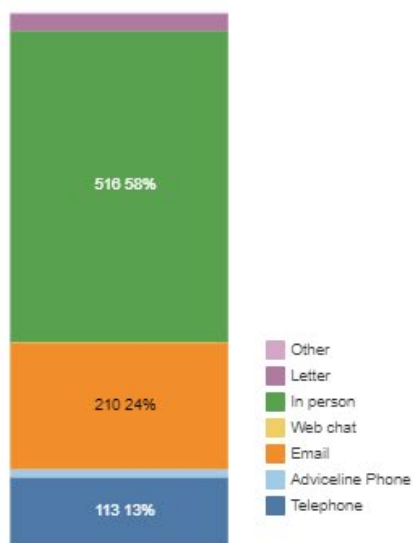
Summary

Clients	351
Quick client contacts	
Issues	1,245
Activities	883
Cases	395

Outcomes

Income gain	£151,199
Re-imbursments, services, loans	£730
Debts written off	£49,298
Repayments rescheduled	£28,477
Other	£1,405

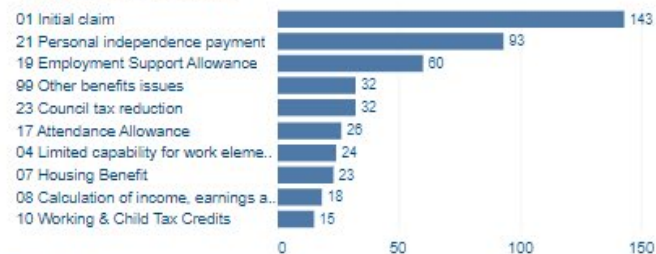
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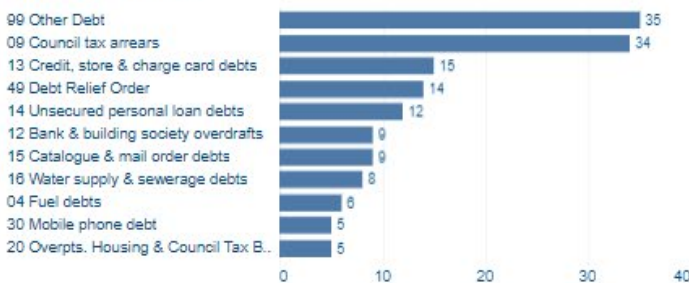
Issues

	Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	335	145
Benefits Universal Credit	225	88
Consumer goods & services	43	25
Debt	186	68
Education	4	4
Employment	50	26
Financial services & capability	21	16
GVA & Hate Crime	4	4
Health & community care	15	12
Housing	103	57
Immigration & asylum	18	10
Legal	55	41
Other	15	14
Relationships & family	85	40
Tax	28	21
Travel & transport	26	21
Utilities & communications	32	14
Grand Total	1,245	

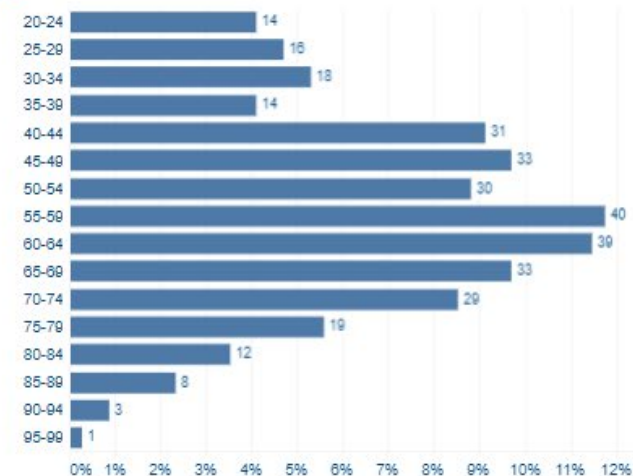
Top benefit issues



Top debt issues



Age



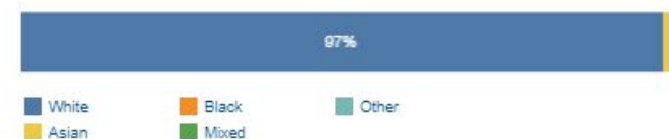
Gender



Disability / Long-term health



Ethnicity



Future Plans - 2022-23

From the end of 2021 CANS has been working to re-introduce its face-to-face advice services across North Somerset. From March 2022 our team of Outreach Advisers will be delivering in person advice from the Beacon Hub in Portishead. This will be in addition to remote advice through telephone, email and webchat.

- **Advice First Aid** – this is a pilot with WsM Foodbank. We will be delivering a programme of training for WsM Foodbank front line staff which will give them a variety of skills, including being able to guide individuals to self-help, identify issues including how to recognize emergency situations, how to make referrals and who to refer to. We hope to roll this out across North Somerset.
- **Hubs and lighthouses** - we will continue to work with our partners and colleagues across North Somerset to support the creation of a network of hubs and lighthouses where people will be able to access help, support and services including access to Citizens Advice.
- **In person and remote advice** – people access our services in different ways and our ambition is to make it as easy as possible for local people to get the advice they need when they need it. However, we are completely aware that the pandemic related restrictions have created a large barrier for in-person support and advice. Now that these restrictions have been lifted, we are doing all we can to reintroduce and develop our in-person advice services whilst retaining the remote advice services that we have developed over the last two years.
- **Money Advice** – the impending cost of living crisis and increase in fuel costs is going to have a very negative impact on local residents and may cause a great deal of hardship. CANS has received Money & Pension Service Funding for many years, however the recent recommissioning has put this in jeopardy. With the support of North Somerset Council, our Money Advice Service is secure until March 2023 and we will do all we can to ensure this service continues to be available to local people.

North Somerset – Key Statistics

12,861 people claiming Council Tax Support (Q4 2020/21)

11,000 households in fuel poverty

15,896 people in receipt of Universal Credit of which **4,890** claiming up to 1 year (May 2021)

4,668 children living in poverty

7,507 households in receipt of Housing Benefit of which **732** are working (Feb 2021)

5,501 people claiming Employment & Support Allowance (Q3 2020/21)

6,216 people 65+ entitled to Attendance Allowance (Q3 2020/21)

4,578 people claiming Pension Credit (Q3 2020/21)

3,407 people entitled to Carer's Allowance (Q3 2020/21)

10,300 people furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (April 2021)

5,772 Food parcels distributed of which **2,422** distributed to children (April-Sept 2020 – *Trussell Trust*)

Who we are and what we do



Remote Generalist Advice Service – our remote generalist service (telephone, email and webchat) is delivered by our team of 25 Volunteer Generalist Advisers and 3 paid Generalist Advisers who are supported by paid Advice Session Supervisors.



Face to Face Generalist Advice Service – this service is being delivered by Volunteer Generalist Advisers and paid Outreach Advisers. Pre-booked appointments are available at CANS' Office in Weston-super-Mare, and new outreach services are being re-established in Portishead, Nailsea, Clevedon, Yatton, Banwell, Winscombe and Worle.



In-reach Services - dedicated services delivered by paid Specialist Advisers to service users of partner organisations. These services are available either in location or via remote access for:

- Weston General Hospital – Macmillan funded dedicated service for patients living with cancer
- Weston Court House – Legal Aid Agency funded dedicated service for people facing repossession
- WsM Foodbank – Trussell Trust funded dedicated service for people being helped by the foodbank (from April 2022)



Dedicated Projects – we work in partnership with a number of local and national partners to deliver the following services:

- **Debt Free South West** (funded by Money and Pension Service) – a partnership of 8 advice agencies delivering debt advice across Gloucestershire, Bristol, BANES, North Somerset and South Somerset. In 2020-21 CANS helped **1,593** clients to manage a recorded **£3.7 million** of debt by negotiating with creditors, rescheduling payments, and writing debts off through insolvency.
- **Macmillan Cancer Support Income Maximisation** – we work in partnership with Macmillan Cancer support to provide advice and assistance to people living with cancer, their families and carers. These services are delivered by dedicated advisers through face-to-face and telephone advice from locations to suit the client including home visits and at Weston General Hospital. In 2020-21 we helped just under **616** clients through this project with recorded outcomes of over **£1.7 million** in income gained through grant applications and benefit claims and through debts managed.

Who we are and what we do



Dedicated Projects – continued

- **Housing Advice** – we are funded by North Somerset Council and The Legal Aid Agency to provide housing advice and to run the Housing Possession Court Duty desk providing advice, support and representation for people whose homes are being repossessed. In 2020-21 CANS helped around **1,000** clients with housing related issues.
- **Welfare Rights Appeals** – funded by North Somerset Council and Community Justice Fund to assist local residents to challenge benefit decisions. Just under 40% of all CANS enquiries relate to Benefit issues and in 2020-21 we recorded **£3 million** in financial outcomes for clients in income gained through benefit claims and benefit appeals.
- **#FirstSteps** - this is a multi-agency project funded by North Somerset Council to deliver advice and support to people in receipt of Council Tax Support who are in council tax arrears.
- **Family Law Advice** – we work in partnership with Gloucester Domestic Abuse Support Service to provide advice and Mackenzie Friend support for litigants in person dealing with family law issues. We particularly focus on litigants in person who have been victims of domestic abuse.
- **Help to Claim** – funded by the Department for Work and Pensions through national Citizens Advice. We provide support and assistance for people making claims for Universal Credit from the initial application through their first full payment. We work in collaboration with Jobcentre Plus in Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare.
- **WHAM Project** – we work in partnership with The Centre for Sustainable Energy, Talking Money, We Care Home Improvements, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council, Citizens Advice Bristol to provide advice on energy, money, benefits and to carry out home repairs.

Who we are and what we do



Dedicated Projects – continued

- **Pier Health PCN Social Prescribing Service** – a partnership between Pier Health PCN, Citizens Advice North Somerset and Alliance Homes. The service provides a social prescribing service for a wide range of community related support with an emphasis on loneliness and isolation, and on the determinants of health, particularly low income, employment, learning, support, housing, debt, financial management and domestic abuse.
- **Social Prescribing (Older People)** – This service sits alongside the Pier Health PCN Social Prescribing Service and is funded by Quartet Community Foundation’s Catalyst Fund to provide a dedicated Link Worker specifically working with older people.
- **Wessex Water** - we are funded to support clients access the variety of schemes provided by Wessex Water to assist those on low incomes or who have fallen into arrears with their water bills.
- **Quartet Community Foundation** – for a number of years we have received Surviving Winter funding to provide immediate financial assistance in the form of fuel top-ups for older people in financial difficulties.
- **WsM Foodbank** – a dedicated in person advice service for people in food poverty and receiving assistance through the Foodbank.

Our services are free, confidential, impartial and non-judgmental.

Citizens Advice North Somerset is the trading name of North Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau
Registered Office: 39 Oxford Street, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1TN
Charity registration number: 1052967
Company Limited by Guarantee registered number: 2906303
www.nscab.org.uk



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