

## THANKS A MILLION

### Scottish CAB service dealt with 1m issues last year



Analysis by Citizens Advice Scotland has shown that in 2012/13, the Scottish CAB Service dealt with over one million issues. The majority of these – nearly 850,000 – were brought directly to a CAB (including the Citizens Advice Direct telephone helpline) with another 200,000 issues being processed by the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline.

The biggest advice area CAB deal with is welfare benefits, with issues increasing by 7% over the last three years. This includes a 106% increase in the number of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) issues brought into bureaux between 2010/11 and 2012/13. These complicated and stressful cases increased from 36,827 issues to 75,967 issues during that time, reflecting the massive strain welfare changes are causing on people and on bureaux. The next two top advice

areas were debt and employment. Susan McPhee, Head of Policy at CAS, said, "People in Scotland are still struggling with the effects of the recession. There is a lack of stable, secure work that pays enough to survive on. At such a time, our services would always be in high demand. Add to that welfare reforms, which are causing problems for many bureau clients

and workers alike, and we can begin to understand what a busy period the Scottish CAB Service is going through.

"Of course, our new role as a consumer champion has also increased our workload, and it's good to see people in Scotland turning to our helplines and bureaux to seek advice on their rights as empowered consumers. "But the main message I take away from this startling statistic of one million issues dealt with in 2012/13 is that the CAB Service is vital for communities across Scotland. When you need to turn to someone for help, you can depend on us."

This poster was displayed at CAS receptions in both Scottish and Westminster Parliaments in the Spring.

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**PAINT THE CAB RED**

# FINAL STAGES IN TRANSFER OF CONSUMER FUNCTIONS

By Sarah Beattie-Smith



Sarah Beattie-Smith, Head of Consumer Futures at CAS

*On 1st April 2014, Citizens Advice Scotland became officially responsible for speaking out for consumers of essential regulated services, focusing on energy, post and water.*

Added to our existing consumer advice and campaigning work, this means we and our sister organisation in England and Wales are now the consumer champions for people all over Britain.

The Citizens Advice Service provides a one-stop shop for specialist advice by phone, email, online and face to face through our CAB network, and we campaign to put an end to the issues that cause people hardship and misery.

*Consumer Futures*, the body that used to lead on consumer advocacy across energy, post and water, officially transferred to the Citizens Advice Service at the beginning of April, and I have been appointed to head this unit as part of the CAS Policy team.

Also on April 1st, Citizens Advice Scotland took on the Extra Help Unit, a team of telephone caseworkers based in Glasgow that helps people throughout Great Britain who have complex energy or postal complaints, or who are at risk of having their gas or electricity cut off.

We are really delighted with these developments, as they enhance the ability of our service to help people in these important areas. The frontline experience and insight of CAB advisers, combined with the market and policy expertise and statutory powers of Consumer Futures, creates a stronger champion for consumers – all under the umbrella of a CAB service that people already know and trust.

Having these new powers and functions within CAS makes it simpler for people to find out how to get better deals or sort out problems. And it makes it easier for companies, politicians and policy-makers to understand how to meet their needs.

The CAB service has a strong history of supporting consumers, from campaigning to make sure payday loans and scams don't ruin lives to helping people slash their energy bills.

In addition, the Citizens Advice Consumer Service, partly delivered from our call centre in Stornoway, has helped almost 60,000 people solve their problems since its launch two years ago.

We'll keep on helping people whatever problem they come to us with – whether it's consumer issues about goods or services, or benefits, housing or employment problems.

And we'll keep on speaking out for people across all the issues we currently campaign on – such as making sure benefit changes don't leave people high and dry.

But alongside this we now have even more powers and funding to help people, whatever their problem, and make sure those in power hear their voice.

*Sarah Beattie-Smith is the Consumer Futures Scotland Manager, which now sits within the CAS Policy and Communications section. Sarah was previously Policy and Parliamentary Officer for CAS.*

**POLICY AND CAMPAIGNING DAY.**  
challenging unfairness, working for change.

A chance for CAB social policy co-ordinators and interested others to meet each other and CAS staff, and explore policy and campaigns ideas around issues facing bureau clients. Includes showcasing of CAB work and sharing ideas for future projects.

1st September 2014 10am to 4pm  
Calton Centre, Edinburgh

To find out more or register, contact Rhiannon Sims: rhiannon.sims@cas.org.uk 0131 550 1017

citizens advice scotland | citizens advice bureau

# 15,000 SCOTTISH BUSINESSES HIT BY UNFAIR DELIVERY CHARGES

April saw the latest phase of CAS's campaign on unfair delivery charges, as we published our latest survey data showing the impact these charges have on the business community in Scotland.

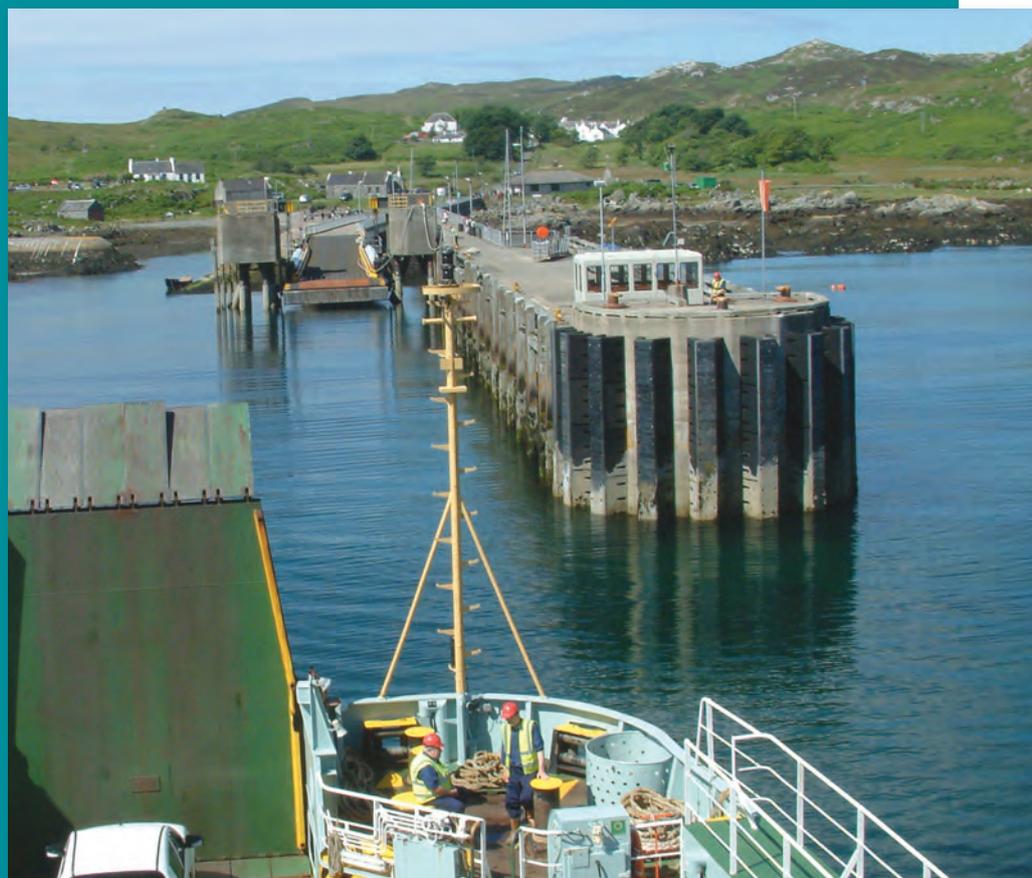
90% of rural businesses that responded to the survey have told us they are charged extra for having items delivered just because of their postcode, and 76% felt this had a substantial impact on their business. The survey report 'Postcode Penalty – the Business Burden' can be downloaded from [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk).

Citizens Advice Scotland's Policy Manager **Keith Dryburgh** says, "We have been campaigning on the issue of unfair delivery charges for the last few years. So far we have mainly concentrated on the impact it has on consumers. But we are aware that it hits businesses too, in the spring we invited Scottish businesses to report their experience of the issue, and we published the results of that survey in April.

"What was clear was that businesses across Scotland are very badly hit by this problem, and it is a serious burden on them. Nearly 250 businesses responded to our survey in just a few weeks. Most were from the north and north east, but this is not just a rural issue. It affects big cities and towns and postcodes covering over half of Scotland.

"We have found in previous research that many companies

**“Mark-ups can be as much as 50%, which can be devastating to a small business”**



base their delivery fees purely on postcodes, rather than on the actual cost of delivering an item. Mark-ups can be as much as 50%, which can be devastating to a small business

which has to buy in stock. Many companies also refuse to deliver to certain areas at all, while others have pricing policies which are unclear or actually misleading.

"In our last report, 'Postcode Penalty' we showed that this problem affects one million consumers in Scotland. In the Business Burden version of that report we estimate that it affects 15,000 businesses in those areas too. The report makes clear that many businesses feel their profit margins

are cut significantly by these unfair charges. Many have had to change their business, cut wages or lay off staff as a result, all of which has a knock-on effect on their local economy – particularly in rural areas.

"We want to thank all the businesses who responded to our survey. We will continue to campaign on this issue and we would urge all political parties and others to back our campaign for a fair deal for Scottish consumers and businesses. In the report we outline a number of recommendations. For example, traders could alleviate this problem substantially simply by using Royal Mail, but many refuse to do so. We hope that this report will add weight to the movement for change on this issue."

# Borders young people take to the red carpet in bittersweet celebration of youth project



Cast and Crew at the Premiere. L-R: Craig Gell, Rhona Calder, Connor Candlin, Sophie Wild, Martin Smith, Megan Lett, Frazer Pickering, Callum Merritt, Aaron Bolton, Annette McGraith, Aaron Millar



Roxburgh and Berwickshire Citizens Advice Bureau Youthinfo film *"The Domino Effect"* successfully premiered in Hawick on April 17th to praise from all who attended. The film aims to raise awareness of the CAB's services and to celebrate the Youthinfo project's success, as it enters into a new scaled-down phase. The DVD – which took the 16 to 20 year old volunteers over 400 hours to make – covers issues such as benefits, debt, housing and relationships. The film follows a young man dismissed from his job in the army. It skilfully and subtly shows how this one initial problem spirals into every other area of his life when he doesn't deal with it or seek help, and drives home the value of preventative CAB advice. There are hopes that the video may

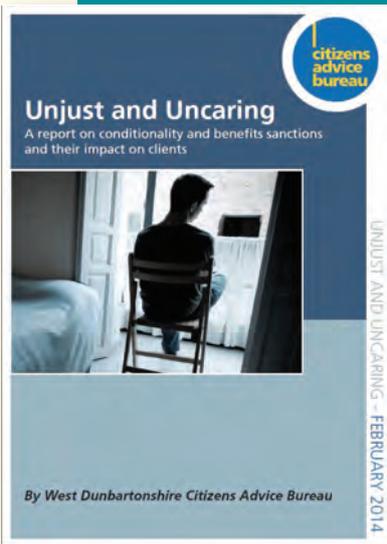
be able to replicate some of the work the young people involved with the project have done in engaging with local schools. Though, of course, it will not be able to replace the human touch of the youngsters, who have been going into schools themselves over the past few years, publicising the CAB's services available and most of interest to young people.

Roxburgh & Berwickshire Citizens Advice Bureau have been delivering the highly successful Youthinfo@CAB project, aimed at 16-25 year olds, since 2009 thanks to funding from Scottish Borders Council Fairer Scotland Fund and the Bank of Scotland Foundation. However, the reduction in that funding has led the group to change strategy and produce this

excellent new DVD to promote the CAB service to local schools.

Over the last four and a half years the project has seen many highs, including its expansion into Roxburghshire. MSP Jim Hume sang the praises of Roxburgh & Berwickshire CAB's innovative youth work in the Scottish Parliament, where the project received cross party support during a members' debate in October 2013. The project has had over 1200 contacts with clients who have raised over 4000 issues, and it has enabled young folk to gain access to over £213,000. Funding for the DVD came from Citizens Advice Scotland Community Action Fund and YouthChex. The DVD will be shown in the nine high school in the Scottish Borders.

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE CAB TAKES THE LEAD ON JOBCENTRE SANCTIONS



West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau launched a scathing report in February showing the lack of fairness in the benefits system.

The report – ‘*Unjust and Uncaring*’ – focuses on the impact of benefit sanctions on unemployed and disabled benefit claimants in West Dunbartonshire. While CAS has published considerable evidence from the service across Scotland, this is the first substantial evidence

report of its kind from an individual CAB.

As well as addressing the arguments as to whether conditionality works, the report highlights the difficulties for unemployed people in an area where it

has been said that there are 40 applications for each vacancy. The report condemns conditionality and the sanctions process for the lack of fairness, the lack of transparency and the failure of Job Centre Plus to help people find work.

June Maxwell, a volunteer adviser at Clydebank CAB, and one of the driving forces behind the report, says:

“Working without pay is meant to be rewarding in other aspects – but how rewarding can it be to watch a pensioner in tears or to hear your client say as he walks out that he’s off home to think of ways to kill himself?”

“Those bearing the brunt of sanctions include the young, the old and the sick – often those very same people who are through lack of skills or means, unable to challenge decisions that affect their wellbeing. That’s why agencies like ours must act as their voice.”

The *Unjust and Uncaring* report is available at the CAS website publications page.

## ANGUS CAB MONEY ADVICE PROJECT WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD



*CABs across the country will know how heavily they are relied upon by those struggling with debt for advice and help.*

*Now a Big Lottery Funded project running in Tayside specifically aimed at improving the financial situation of clients in more vulnerable or precarious positions has won plaudits from service users and partners alike.*

The ‘Avoid Debt, Act Positively Today’ (ADAPT) project has been running since May 2011, and is due to continue for another two years until 2016. Since May

2011, it has helped over 1,150 clients in group and one-one sessions, with positive outcomes reported which run far deeper than users’ bank balances.

Service users were interviewed for a special interim evaluation of the ADAPT Project for Angus CAB, published in February, and their testimonies were quite striking. People helped with their budgeting, banking, borrowing and benefits reported feeling that their finances were in better health, and also as so many of us have long suspected their emotional and physical health improved too. The report found a “*significant sustained impact on clients’ mental health, confidence and ability to take control of their financial situation*”, as well as “*universal praise*” from clients who were quick to point out how much they appreciated the non-judgemental attitude of the ADAPT advisers they saw.

If you would like to read the full report of the ADAPT Project, (a report from Nick Hopkins Consulting), please email Kathy Anderson, Head of Service (Development) at [kanderson@arbroathcab.casonline.org.uk](mailto:kanderson@arbroathcab.casonline.org.uk).

# Glasgow poverty *'Not inevitable'*

*Glasgow's eight CAB Managers convened a meeting of leading charities and council officials in Glasgow City Chambers in March to declare that poverty in the city is not inevitable and must be eradicated.*

The conference was attended by over 170 people from dozens of charities and community groups across the city.

Citizens Advice Scotland's Chief Executive Margaret Lynch told the conference, "There is nothing inevitable about poverty in this city. We must not allow that defeatist attitude to prevail. No organisation has all the answers, but by working together we can make practical differences to peoples' lives every



day, and eventually stamp out hardship altogether. That must be our goal, and if we remain focused on it and work together there is no reason why we can't achieve it."

Cllr Malcolm Cuning, Glasgow Council's Executive Member for Social Care, told the conference:

"We are a rich city and yet one in three of the city's children live in

poverty. That is something we should all regard as an outrage and we all have a role to play in eradicating it. Today is not just a talking shop. We must begin to work together better than ever before, to make the real practical changes that will make poverty and hardship a thing of the past."

Other speakers at the conference included Dr Jim McCormick, of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Caroline Mockford, a member of the Poverty Truth Commission and Jackie Killeen, Scottish Director, Big Lottery Fund.

The conference made a start at putting together an action plan, involving all the anti-poverty groups and agencies in the city.

## MINISTER LAUNCHES NEW CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROJECT AT STIRLING AND CLACKMANNANSHIRE CABS

In May Margaret Burgess MSP – formerly a CAB Manager and now Scotland's Minister for Housing and Welfare – officially launched the CAB/Criminal Justice Alliance Project for the Criminal Justice Service of Stirling and Clackmannanshire Council.

Stirling CAB dealt with 13,368 issues, generated £1.43 million in unclaimed benefits and resolved £2.3 million worth of consumer debt.

The new investment of £126,884 from the Big Lottery Fund will help provide advice and assistance to many more vulnerable people and families.



Stirling and Clackmannanshire Bureaux are well trusted and well utilised community organisations and are the advice agency that people engage with in their thousands each year. In 2012/2013

vulnerable people engaged in the criminal justice system. We're excited at the collaboration with our statutory partners in this project. The true value of partnership working is that our

mutual clients will benefit. CAB and the Criminal Justice Service can now look forward to the challenges of the New Year, when we will quickly expand our staff team, our operations and provide a much needed resource to both our statutory partners in the frontline and, importantly, our mutual clients."

Clackmannanshire CAB Manager, Duncan Dennett said, "We are very happy to co-operate in this exciting venture. The Stirling CAB role will be to administer funding from the Big Lottery Fund and both our bureaux will provide the workers, both paid and unpaid, to provide advice, information and casework support up to and including tribunal and civil courts to assist Criminal Justice staff and their clients."

# #ChallengeIt

## Benefit Sanctions Campaign

- Banff & Buchan CAB
- Caithness CAB
- Citizens Advice and Rights Fife
- Central Borders CAB
- Denny & Dunipace CAB
- East Kilbride CAB
- East Sutherland CAB
- Falkirk CAB
- Grangemouth & Bo'ness CAB
- Motherwell & Wishaw CAB
- Nairn CAB
- North West Sutherland CAB
- Parkhead CAB
- Peebles CAB
- Perth CAB
- Roxburgh & Berwickshire CAB
- Skye & Lochalsh CAB
- Stirling CAB
- South West Aberdeenshire CAB
- Turriff CAB
- Western Isles Citizens Advice Service
- West Dunbartonshire CAB

**BENEFIT MONEY STOPPED?**  
**CHALLENGE IT.**

**IF YOU HAVE BEEN SANCTIONED. YOU CAN CHALLENGE THE DECISION. DON'T WAIT. ASK YOUR CAB TODAY.**

**BENEFIT MONEY STOPPED?**  
**CHALLENGE IT.**

#CHALLENGEIT

**IF SANCTIONED: TAKE ACTION**

- ASK FOR A MANDATORY RECONSIDERATION WITHIN A MONTH. IF YOU DON'T GET YOUR FIRST SANCTION REVERSED, LATER ONES COULD BE FOR LONGER.
- IF THAT FAILS, WE CAN HELP YOU APPEAL, THROUGH A FREE, INDEPENDENT TRIBUNAL.
- WHEN YOUR MONEY IS STOPPED, YOU CAN APPLY FOR HARSHIP PAYMENTS FROM THE JOB CENTRE.

Planning Partnership, NHS Western Isles and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

The guide highlighted that 70% of the islanders are suffering from fuel poverty, and are frequently facing a choice between 'heating or eating'. One child in ten lives below the poverty line in the Western Isles, WIPAG has stated. Beyond this, the Western Isles still

suffer disproportionately-high food prices. Welfare reforms have also had troubling effects.

Co-ordinated by Western Isles Citizens Advice Service (WICAS) with support from Citizens Advice Scotland's Community Action Team (CAT), the guide offers practical help and sources of aid for those

suffering hardship in the area. Electronic copies of the *Survival Guides*, are available on the campaign pages of the CAS website.

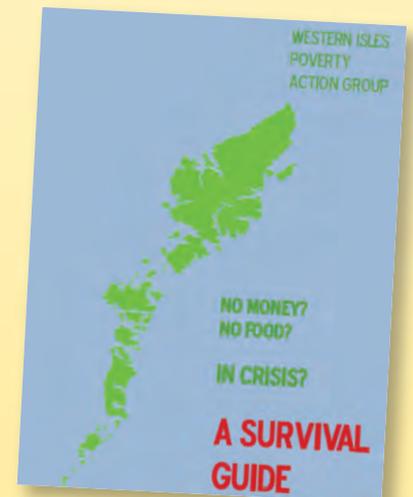
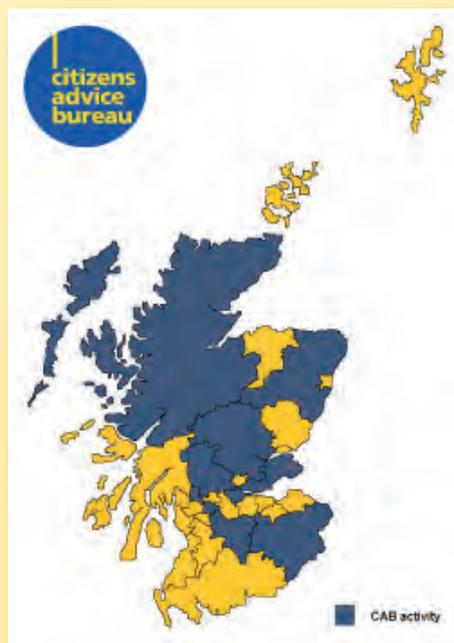
WIPAG and the CAT have made a film highlighting related issues on the island which can also be viewed on the CAS website.

In addition, All CABs in Scotland have been issued with 'Challenge It' postcards and mini-cards, offering tips both on how to avoid being sanctioned and what to do if you are.

*This summer, bureaux across Scotland are raising the issue of benefit sanctions. The 'Challenge It' campaign aims to raise awareness of the right to appeal against sanctions.*

National messages are being spread and local work undertaken, with Citizens Advice Scotland publishing a report based on CAB evidence about the suffering sanctions are causing called *'Sanctioned: what benefit?'*. 22 CAB (see full list in column opposite) have also produced 'Survival Guides', information booklets aimed at people in crisis, based on the document created last summer by Stirling CAB.

April saw the launch of the Western Isles Poverty Action Group's (WIPAG) Survival Guide. WIPAG brings together a coalition of concerned organisations including the Hebridean Housing Partnership, the Outer Hebrides Community



The map left shows the local authority areas where a survival guide has been produced

# Armed Services Ad *partnerships, police and parades*

Police Scotland and CAS launch partnership to help Scotland's Military Heroes

*Citizens Advice Scotland's Armed Services Advice Project (ASAP) has teamed up with Police Scotland and Citizens Advice Direct (CAD) to provide more support for vulnerable veterans across Scotland.*

Under a new partnership launched in April, Police Scotland now refer vulnerable veterans they encounter in their work on to the ASAP helpline in CAD, so the project can help even more people get the support they need.

At the official launch of the partnership in early June, CAS Chair Dominic Notarangelo said:

*"ASAP's expertise, and the holistic nature of the Citizens Advice service, covering almost every community in Scotland, fits well with Police Scotland's approach of continuing to support people and communities locally. As vulnerable veterans are a hard-to-reach group who often have reservations about coming forward to ask for help, the fact Police Scotland are able to act as an intermediary to put us in touch is a great stride forward.*

*"It's a true example of smarter working between organisations. The expertise and facilities were all in place, and now we have a working partnership. It will help police to keep people safe, and allow us to reach out and help more*



L-R : Poppyscotland Chief Executive Ian McGregor, Police Scotland Deputy Chief Constable Rose Fitzpatrick, CAS Chair Dominic Notarangelo and Citizens Advice Direct Chief Executive Andrew Bartlett

*vulnerable veterans, making sure they get the support they need and deserve."*

The phonenumber will operate through Citizens Advice Direct. Using this facility in conjunction with 14 regional support officers means the partnership can deliver a whole range of advice, suited to the needs of clients. Altogether, CAD handled 400,000 calls during the last year, and is a modern, accessible service, available to everyone in Scotland.

Police Scotland Deputy Chief Constable Rose Fitzpatrick added:

*"We know that the vast majority of veterans leave the army and make successful transitions to civilian life. In fact, many go on to have successful careers in the police. However, for a small number, a lot of extra support is needed. Police Scotland officers come across people in a range of situations, and*

*if we assess them to potentially be vulnerable, we will now ask them if they have ever served with the armed forces and refer them onto ASAP. Hopefully, ASAP can then offer them the help and support they need to get onto an even keel.*

*"Now that we are able to offer services nationally, it has made the introduction of this partnership very smooth, and we have issued standard practices that all officers should follow, wherever they are in the country."*



# vice Project Update

Poppyscotland Chief Executive Ian McGregor welcomed the initiative, saying:

*“Early intervention is at the heart of all Poppyscotland’s welfare services.*

*This new partnership between Police Scotland and ASAP means we can identify and offer support at a much earlier stage to vulnerable veterans coming into contact with*

*the police. ASAP is a project we are extremely proud to fund, and we are sure this partnership will add to its valuable work.”*

## Armed Forces Day – 28th June

*Across the UK Armed Services Day was celebrated on 28th June, with national celebrations focussed on Stirling. ASAP advisers attended events across the country, where they were able to raise awareness of the services they provide to armed forces communities and families.*

*Ally Gemmell, the ASAP Adviser at Stirling CAB said, “Armed Forces Day is an annual event, and always proves a great opportunity to get the word out there about what we do and to support Armed Services communities. However, having national celebrations focussed on Stirling made this year extra special, and a bit higher profile than normal. The First Minister dropped by to find out more about the service, and in spite of the damp weather, the whole day was fantastic.”*



Photos from around the country



# ZERO HOURS CONTRACTS EXPOSED

## CAS prompts government action



*Thousands of working Scots are on the edge of poverty, due to the misuse of Zero Hours Contracts (ZHC) by rogue employers. This was successfully illustrated in a report published on 23rd July by Citizens Advice Scotland, based on mountains of policy feedback from bureaux around the country.*

Our evidence was reported and discussed on BBC Scotland's 'Scotland 2014' news programme. The Business Secretary, Vince Cable, was grilled on its findings by Sarah Smith and he acknowledged that there had been abusive relationships between employers and employees on zero hours contracts. Furthermore, he pledged action would be taken by the UK Government in a forthcoming bill to deal with the abuse.

However, it is unlikely the UK Government's changes will totally eradicate the problems reported, which include:

- Some workers go for long periods with few hours, or none at all, and therefore little or no pay.
- Hours of work which fluctuate widely from week to week, or changes imposed at short notice - making it hard for employees to plan finances.
- Some employers don't tell their staff the job is a ZHC when they are taken on.
- In a few cases, employers have drastically cut an employee's hours in what seems like an effort to force them to resign.
- Workers on ZHCs often can't claim any benefit or tax credits, making them entirely reliant on the income from this job, and having to turn to debt or foodbanks if their hours are cut.

**“ Vince Cable pledged action would be taken by the UK Government in a forthcoming bill ”**

*CAS will continue to engage with the UK Government and make the case for our recommendations to be fully implemented. Those are:*

- Workers on a zero hours contract should be given a statutory 'right to request' a contract that guarantees hours, without fear of dismissal.
- The UK Government should use the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill to ensure that workers are protected from misuse of zero hours contracts.
- Guidance to individuals, as well as Jobcentre Plus staff, is published clarifying that individuals who leave zero hours contracts due to the lack of work available, or who decline offers of zero hours work for the same reason should not be sanctioned.
- Claimants under Universal Credit should not be sanctioned for not applying for a zero hours vacancy if it does not meet their needs.
- Employers should be required to inform prospective candidates that the vacancy is on a zero hours basis, for instance by publishing it in the job advertisement, or by informing them at interview.

# Parliamentarians take time to hear from CAS



Reception host Bruce Crawford MSP, Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP, CAS CEO Margaret Lynch and Leader of the Scottish Labour Party Johann Lamont MSP



Secretary of State for Scotland, Alistair Carmichael MP

*In March, CAS hosted two successful receptions at Holyrood and Westminster where MPs, Lords and MSPs took time to find out more about Scotland's Citizens Advice Service.*

As well as hearing about how issues like welfare changes and personal debt are affecting CAB clients, it was an opportunity to demonstrate our readiness to take on the work of Consumer Futures and become a consumer champion for everyone in Scotland.

The Westminster reception was attended by 40 out of the 59 Scottish MPs, with speeches from

Labour, the SNP and Scottish Secretary Alistair Carmichael MP. Nicola Sturgeon, Deputy First Minister and Johann Lamont, Leader of the Scottish Labour Party both took time to address the Holyrood reception, with both full of praise for the valuable work of bureaux.

While parliamentarians took the opportunity to ask many questions of CAS staff and find out more about the service, it was also clear how highly they valued the work of Citizens Advice Bureaux in helping people and Citizens Advice Scotland by informing their

parliamentary work. Many spoke very highly of their local CAB and they clearly appreciated evidence reports from CAS. In particular, our ability to quickly relay a picture of what is happening on the ground to policy makers was highlighted as a key strength of our service.

As we look forward to our 75th year, it is clear that MPs and MSPs appreciate that the role of our service, now more than ever, is needed and valued.



Gemma Doyle MP and Eilidh Whiteford MP our reception hosts, addressed us along with CAS CEO Margaret Lynch and Shadow Scotland Office Minister Russell Brown MP



Information about the service on display

# COATBRIDGE VOLUNTEERS PAINT THE CAB RED

The public waiting area and interview rooms at Coatbridge CAB had for some time been crying out for a fresh lick of paint. With resources so stretched and client demand so high, the idea of spending four-figure sums on interior décor was not an option. So it seemed it was one of those jobs that needed done but was permanently on the back-burner.

That was until the bureau, assisted by Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire and three local businesses, pulled together a rather unique team of volunteers willing to get their hands dirty to blitz the painting and decorating job in one busy and fun-packed day.

The team of handy painters was made up of two employees of the Department for Work and Pensions, two from SSE Renewables, one from Warburton's Bellshill, and a further three willing members of the Coatbridge community. Each of the companies promote employer supported volunteering, where they give their staff members time off to give something back to the community.

As they gathered at the CAB at 8am, most of the eight volunteers had never met one another. By 4pm, they had organised themselves as a team, worked hard, had a laugh, and completed all the painting that was required, refreshing the look of the bureau for volunteers and clients alike.

Coatbridge CAB Manager Norma MacDonald says, "It has made such a difference. What used to be drab



Coatbridge Citizens Advice Bureau Manager Norma MacDonald (2nd from left) thanked a team of volunteers who painted CAB premises (Megan O'Raw, Nick Freeman, Peter Regan, Audrie Ford and Irene Crowe

and depressing is now bright and alive. It's a great example of something that

“Now it looks like a really happy, positive place.”

seemed like it wasn't a priority but once it's done you

realise the impact it has – not just on the workers here but also on our clients. The impression people have of the bureau is more influenced by the appearance than by just about anything else, and now it looks like a really happy, positive place.

"I'm very grateful to the team, who rolled up their sleeves and did the work, and I'd encourage every other CAB to look at their walls and ask if they couldn't do with a similar re-brand!"



Irene Crowe



Tina Doran



Hard at work