

Parkhead Citizens Advice Bureau

Citizens

Advice

PARKHEAD CAB

Annual Report 2020 - 21



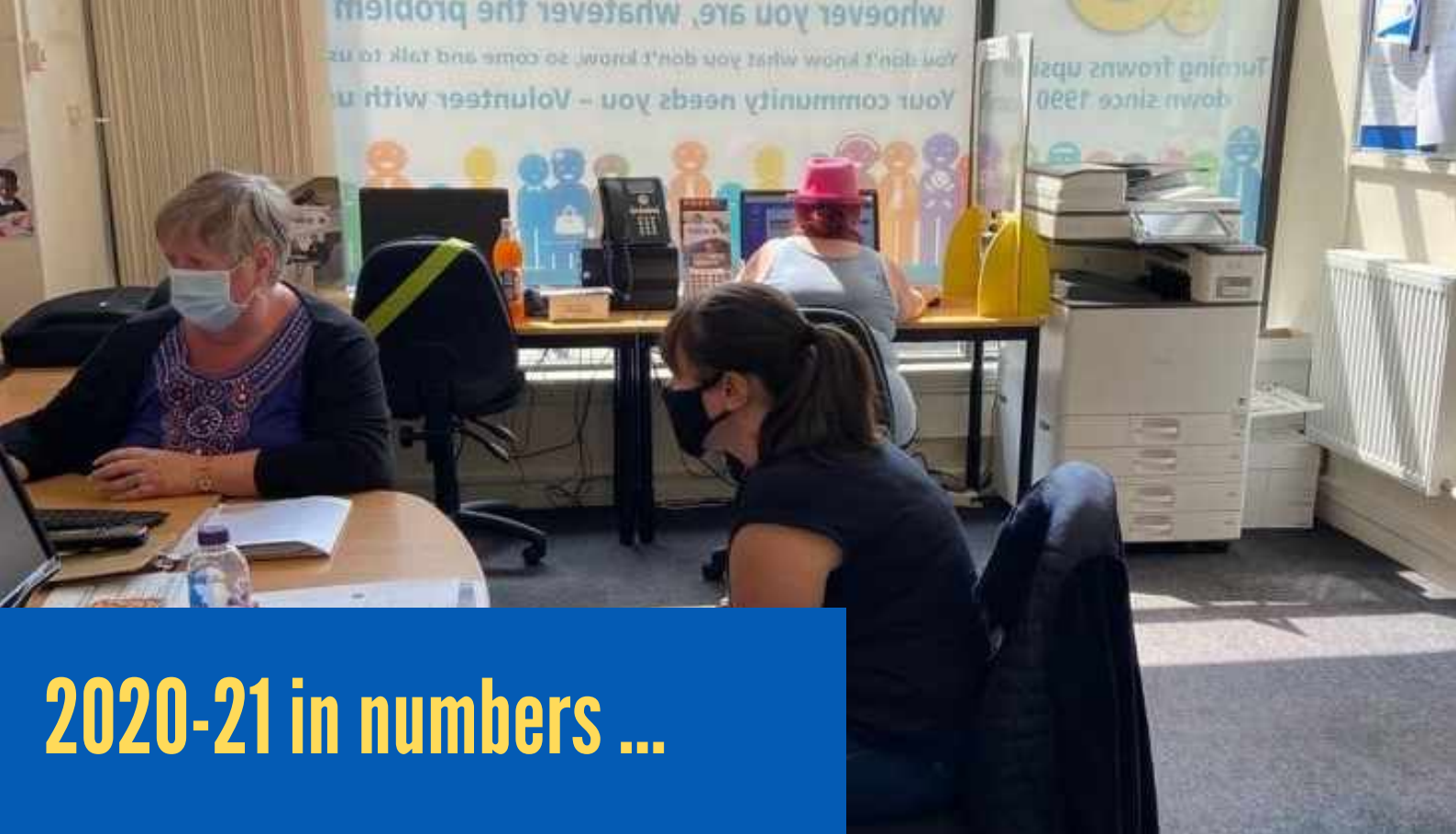
“

**Parkhead Citizens Advice...
Amazing service... I would have
been doomed if I didn't have you
guys helping me with my benefit
enquiries during COVID19, I'd be
homeless.**

”



FREE, CONFIDENTIAL, INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL



2020-21 in numbers ...

1737 people directly helped

8671 problems sorted

2570 existing clients helped

£1.1m+ gained for clients

44 volunteers trained

£0.7m+ gained for third sector

“It was all a bit of a relief ... without CAB I would have been lost. I wouldn’t have got the redundancy money and I couldn’t have filled in the form.”

“That’s the first night that I’ve slept in a proper bed for 4 ½ years.”

“Thank you CAB for all your advice, without you, I doubt we would have had this welcome outcome. I can now sleep at night.”

**citizens
advice
bureau**



What we do ...

for our clients

- We provide quality-assured, holistic advice, information and support for members of the public. We help people understand their situation and tell them what the law says to help them decide a course of action. By giving clients the information and advice they need to tackle their problems, we empower people.
- We don't offer a quick fix answer to a single question but work with people to understand all their problems. On average, each client seeks help with five issues. We aim to make a long term difference to people's lives. Everyone is offered a benefit check to ensure their income is maximised. We work with people to help them manage their finances, save on energy costs and reduce their bills.
- Sometimes clients need help over a long period; in 2020/21 we assisted 1,737 new people, but also worked with 2,570 ongoing clients.
- As a result of our help many people are financially better off, more able to cope and less stressed and anxious. Good advice and information improves lives and saves NHS and social care resources.

“I sleep fine ... I don't worry... I am a lot happier knowing they are there to help”

“I am not the same worried person when I walk out... it's a weight off my shoulders and I'm more happy”.





Positively changing lives ...

through our projects

- Our Youth Training Officer supported 184 young peer advisers across the North East of Glasgow to design and deliver information and workshops in schools, community settings and in Polmont Young Offenders Institution. Many of the young volunteers had disengaged from mainstream education but given training confidently communicated with their peers on a range of topics including employment, consumer and housing rights. Our project aims to prevent young people from getting into difficulties. We empower them to stand up for their rights and realise they too can make a difference.
- Our outreach service in HMP Barlinnie was severely interrupted by the pandemic but we still managed to help 68 prisoners advising them on benefits issues, housing and debt. Accurate information and advice can help prisoners to retain their home, manage their debts and benefits. Our statistics tell us that among our Barlinnie clients there are high levels of mental illness, illiteracy, disability and previous experience of homelessness. Timely advice and support can help to reduce the very high reoffending rates.
- Last year our Pension Guidance Specialist provided guidance to 285 clients on retirement and pension options. Due to her experience and knowledge she assists in training new specialists and in checking the quality of advice offered by pension specialists throughout the Scottish CABx service.

“You’ve really eased my mind on this. I was worried about losing my home but now you’ve explained what happens I feel reassured” (prisoner)



Our volunteers ...

working
throughout
the
pandemic

- Volunteers are the heartbeat of our organisation. During the pandemic they continued to give expert advice, working remotely from their homes answering enquiries by telephone and email. Many also used lockdown to continue their professional training taking online courses to update themselves on changes to the law on benefits, housing and employment.

“It has kept me sane during lockdown, gives me purpose to get up in the morning, gives me something to do its great being able to help clients.” (volunteer)

- When lockdown happened we gave advice continuously from the first day and never stopped, initially by phone and email and then in July 2020 when the Scottish Government declared CABx to be an essential service, we re-opened our doors and with full PPE and social distancing measures in place we are again able to see clients face-to-face. While the telephone and email services suit some people, we know that many of our most vulnerable clients do not have the necessary skills or technology to resolve their problems online. For these people the face-to-face interview is their lifeline.
- Throughout the year we have continued to train new volunteers using Zoom and online courses. On returning to the office our new volunteers have completed their training: working and being mentored by experienced advisers. As members of Citizens Advice Scotland, Parkhead CAB participates in the quality assurance scheme ensuring that clients receive accurate, up to date information and advice. Parkhead recently achieved accreditation in the national standards as an organisation and to deliver advice on welfare benefits, housing, employment and money advice.



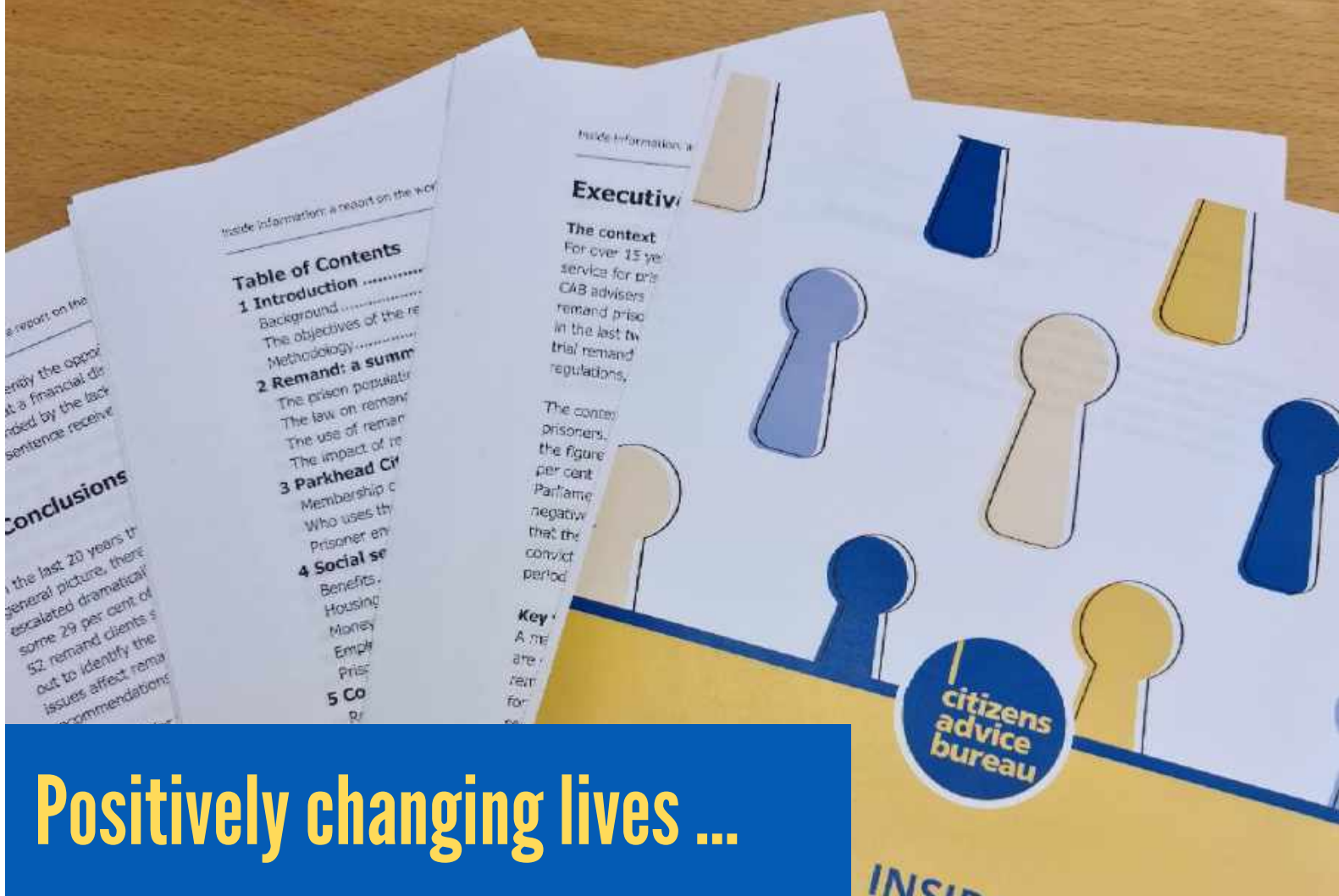
**through
research**

Recently we have researched and reported on two important issues. In 'Locked Down not Locked Out' we interviewed clients and compared the use of telephone and face-to-face services. The research revealed the real need that many vulnerable people have for face-to face help. It also showed how face-to-face services build trust with clients and are important to long term outcomes.

Our report 'Inside Information' focused on the experience of prisoners in Barlinnie who were remanded while awaiting trial. While some crimes will always demand that the accused is remanded, the report showed that remand disrupts the lives of those who may ultimately be found not guilty or awarded a community sentence. The research detailed how benefits and housing legislation disadvantage remand prisoners and argued for alternatives. Leaflets and posters to inform prisoners of their rights were produced to accompany the report which has been circulated to all prisons in Scotland. Parkhead CAB welcomes the recent Scottish Government's consultation on alternatives to remand and will be making a submission.

Both reports can be found on our website:
<https://www.parkheadcab.org.uk/news/locked-down-not-locked-out>
<https://www.parkheadcab.org.uk/news/inside-information>





Positively changing lives ...

Social Policy

As well as giving advice to individuals we try to share our knowledge as much as possible by going out and about talking to groups and via social media, including our Twitter and Facebook pages.

Parkhead CAB knows that to make a long term difference, we have to advocate for human rights and campaign for changes to the law and policies that will improve people's lives. We use the evidence from the people who use our bureau to talk to elected representatives and policy makers. We give the people of Parkhead a voice.

Where we see injustice we strive to highlight this to those in decision making roles, including Councillors, MSPs, MPs, Council officials and other public sector service delivery personnel.

Last year we campaigned on:

- Redundancy rights
- Universal Credit - highlighting issues faced by our clients
- Council Tax - raising problems clients have in contacting Glasgow City Council and claiming rebates

We would like to thank all the public who supported us in 2020-21 during the pandemic and campaigned on our behalf when we faced a funding crisis and risk of closure. Thanks to you, we are still here delivering local advice in your community.

**citizens
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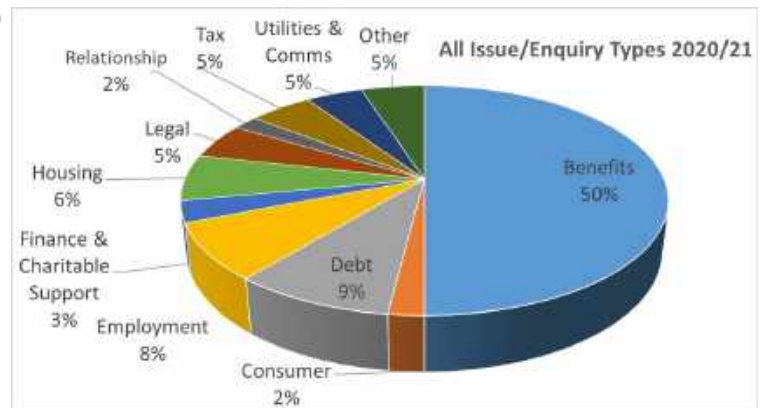


Positively changing lives ...

by serving
our
community

Parkhead is a community organisation: we listen to our clients and regularly ask for their feedback. We know that people in the East End trust us. We offer support to other local organisations. For example, outreach services in the Recovery Café that helps people with addiction issues and our Money Talks Adviser visits local groups to offer benefits and income maximising advice.

In the early part of the pandemic we had a steep rise in employment issues as our workers assisted people to navigate the furlough scheme and redundancy entitlements. As the chart shows welfare benefits and managing debt are the two key issues. Importantly in the pandemic advisers took extra time to support people in our community who were feeling isolated and cut off.



Last year Parkhead's fundraiser assisted other East End charities to make applications to trusts and foundations raising over £800,000 for their organisations.

"Parkhead CAB's Funding officer has been a real safety net... Her input has helped us receive funding"





Our amazing Kilt walkers, Stephen, Julie and Fiona raised funds for us!

We can help you...

If you need advice, information or guidance, we're here for you

- Tel: 0141 554 0004
- Email: info@parkheadcab.org.uk
- Check online for updates about the best way to access our services (www.parkheadcab.org.uk/get-advice).
- Due to COVID there are likely to be continuing restrictions on face to face appointments. Please check at the office if you are unable to phone or go online.

can you help us?

If you'd like to volunteer with us or want to find out more, we'd love to hear from you! We offer extensive training and support from experienced advisers. Please email Mandy, our Training Officer, on info@parkheadcab.org.uk or ring on 0141 550 5900 and leave a message. Mandy will get back to you.

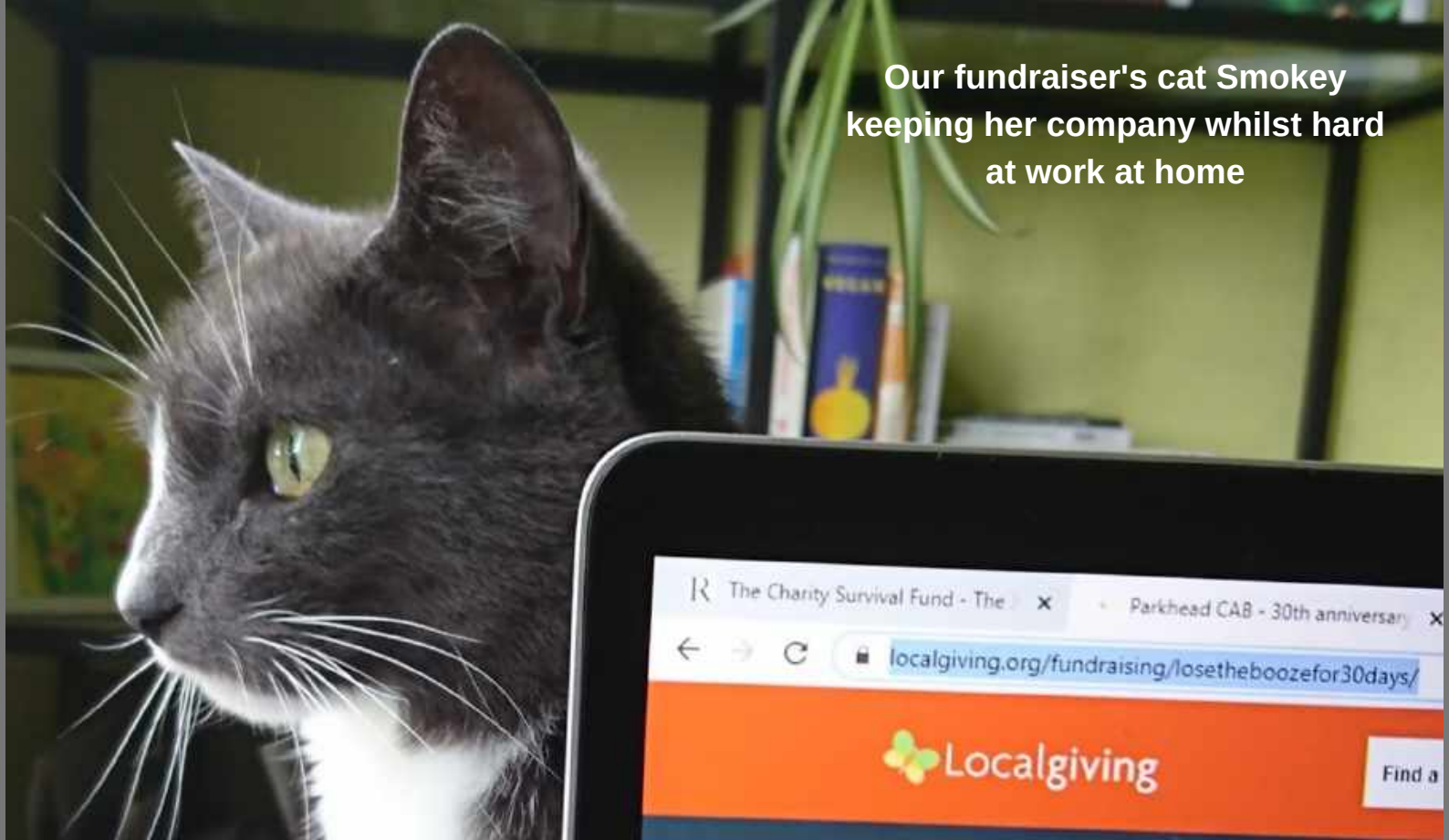
Interested in our work?

Join us on facebook www.facebook.com/ParkheadCAB

Follow us on twitter www.twitter.com/ParkheadCAB

"I had heard that volunteers get really good training and support at Parkhead Citizens Advice Bureau and it was just down the road. I have been a qualified volunteer adviser for about a year now and feel I am providing useful and accurate advice which helps people when they need it most".





Our fundraiser's cat Smokey
keeping her company whilst hard
at work at home

Thank you to our funders ...

Glasgow City Council
Glasgow Community Planning Partnership
Scottish Government
Citizens Advice Scotland
Henry Smith Charity
The Robertson Trust
Bank of Scotland Foundation
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
Co-op Local Community Fund
Garfield Weston Foundation

Thank you also to our amazing Volunteer Board
members, Volunteer Advisers and staff! 😊

If you would like to donate to Parkhead CAB visit
<https://localgiving.org/appeal/PARKHEAD/>



**Citizens Advice Bureaux
are independent
charities and need
donations to keep their
vital work going.**



Parkhead CAB is a Scottish charity (SC014413) and company limited by guarantee (SC396128). We are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRN 617472.

