

Citizens Advice Hart Impact Report 2023/2024



Life

**Doesn't need
to feel like
a maze**



**At Citizens Advice,
we're here to help**

Chief Officer - Review of the Year

This year has been one of significant achievements and transformative impacts, underscoring our unwavering commitment to the community we serve.

Over the past year, we have navigated numerous challenges, including the cost-of-living crisis and evolving client needs. Despite these obstacles, our dedicated team has risen to the occasion, delivering exceptional support and advice for individuals across Hart. Our efforts have resulted in meaningful changes, empowering clients to navigate complex issues and improve their lives.

Two of our most notable accomplishments this year are the expansion of our outreach service and delivery of Advice First Aid training. We have successfully increased our presence in underserved areas, ensuring that more people have access to the crucial advice and resources they need. This expansion has been pivotal in addressing systemic barriers and fostering greater inclusivity within our community.

Our advocacy work has also seen significant strides, as we continue to influence policy changes at local and national levels. By amplifying the voices of those we help, we have contributed to meaningful reforms that address the root causes of the challenges our clients face.

These achievements would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our staff, volunteers, and partners. Their dedication, resilience, and passion for our mission have been the driving force behind our success. I extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of them.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to adapting and innovating to meet the evolving needs of our community. We will continue to build on our successes, forging new partnerships and exploring innovative approaches to deliver even greater impact.

Thank you for your continued support of Citizens Advice Hart. Together, we are making a tangible difference in the lives of many, and I am confident that our collective efforts will lead to a brighter future for our community.

Samantha Mabbott
Chief Executive



The value of our work



Fiscal benefits

£2.45 for every **£1** invested

£1.17 million

savings to government and public services

By helping stop problems occurring or escalating, we reduce pressure on public services like health, housing or out-of-work benefits



Public value

£14.70 for every **£1** invested

£7 million

wider economic and social benefits

Solving problems improves lives and this means better wellbeing, participation and productivity for the people we help.



Financial outcomes

£6.93 for every **£1** invested

£3.3 million

value to people we help

As part of our advice we can increase people's income, through debts written-off, taking up benefits and solving consumer problems

Increasingly complex issues

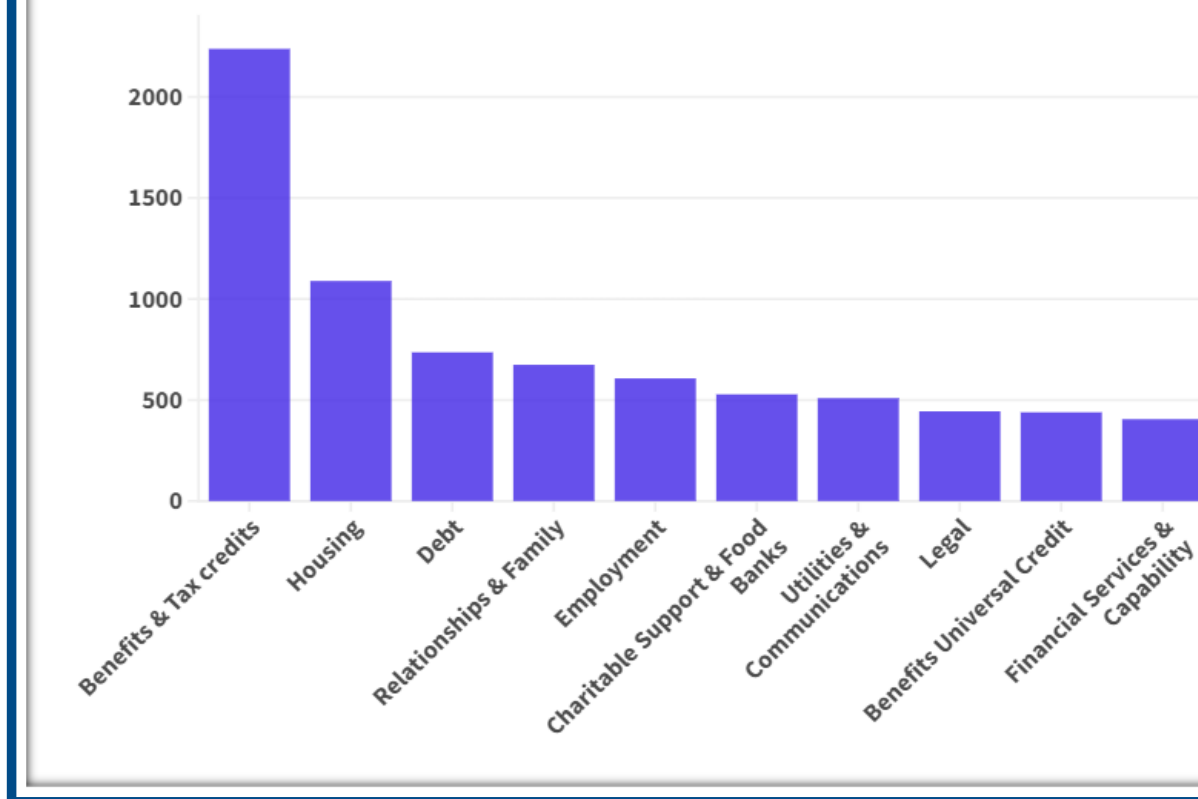
Each client who came to us had an average of **3.4 issues** they needed help with, an increase from **2.9 issues** per client last year

We helped **4,243*** clients with **8,915 issues** (a 33% increase in issues from the previous year)

38% of our clients have a disability or long-term health condition

37% of our clients are in employment

Our Top 10 Issues 2023/2024

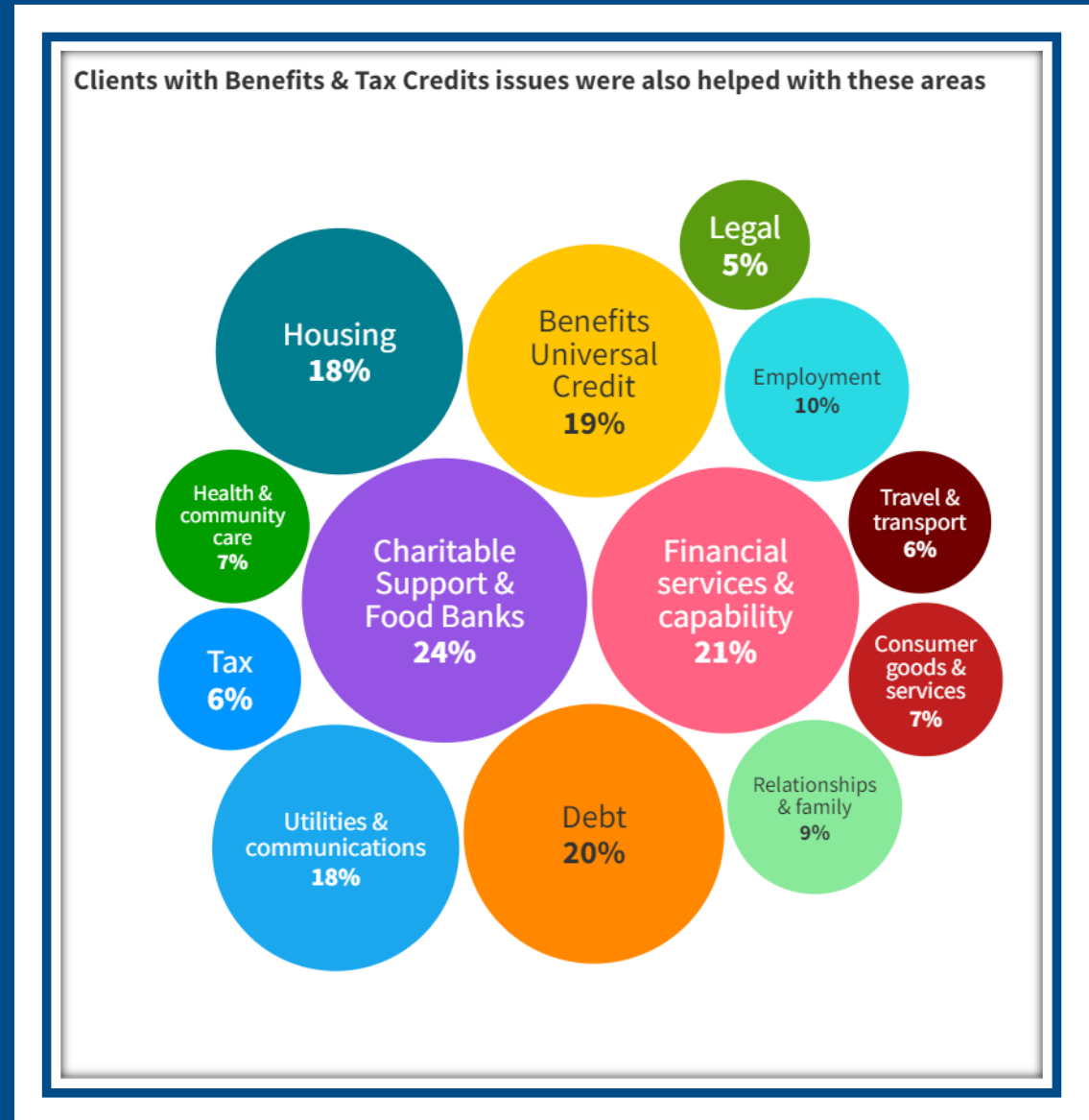


Complexity in detail

The most common issue for our clients was Benefits & Tax Credits

Almost a third of those needed help with another issue:

- **24%** needed charitable support and food banks
- **21%** needed help with financial capability
- **20%** needed help with debt issues



Our advice is effective



3 in 4 people

said their problem was solved following advice and 73% said they could not have resolved their problem without us



87%

of people felt less stressed, depressed or anxious as a result of the help they received



85%

of people would recommend our service and 71% found us easy to access



65%

of people felt their physical health had improved as a result of the help they received



85%

of people said we helped them find a way forward



4 in 10 clients

with a physical or mental health condition sought less help from a professional, following our advice*

Our advice results in real outcomes



£804,689 of income gained by our clients including new benefit awards, charitable payments, budgeting changes and energy advice



£62,323 worth of debts written off



£8,980 of services and loans including food provision/referrals, improvements to property and correcting bills



£136,954 of other gains including improved health and capacity to manage

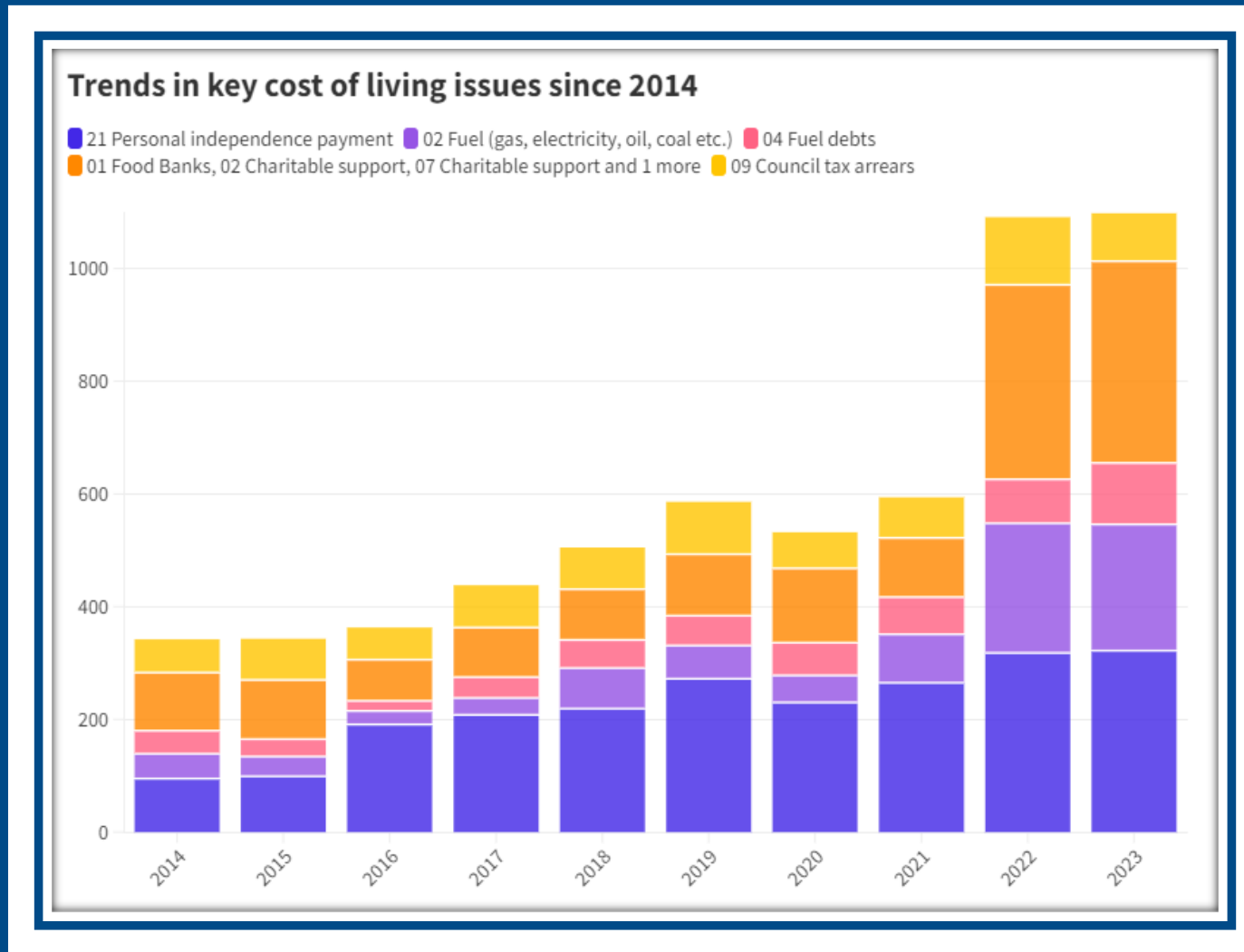
Urgent, face to face emergency support

- Helped **917** drop-in clients in 2023/24
- Distributed **299** Food Bank vouchers
- **52% increase** in food bank related issues compared to last year
- Dealt with **32** safeguarding concerns
- Dealt with **122** issues related to homelessness (up 88% YoY)
- **27%** of our clients rated their problem as urgent
- Distributed SIM cards and devices to individuals who are digitally excluded



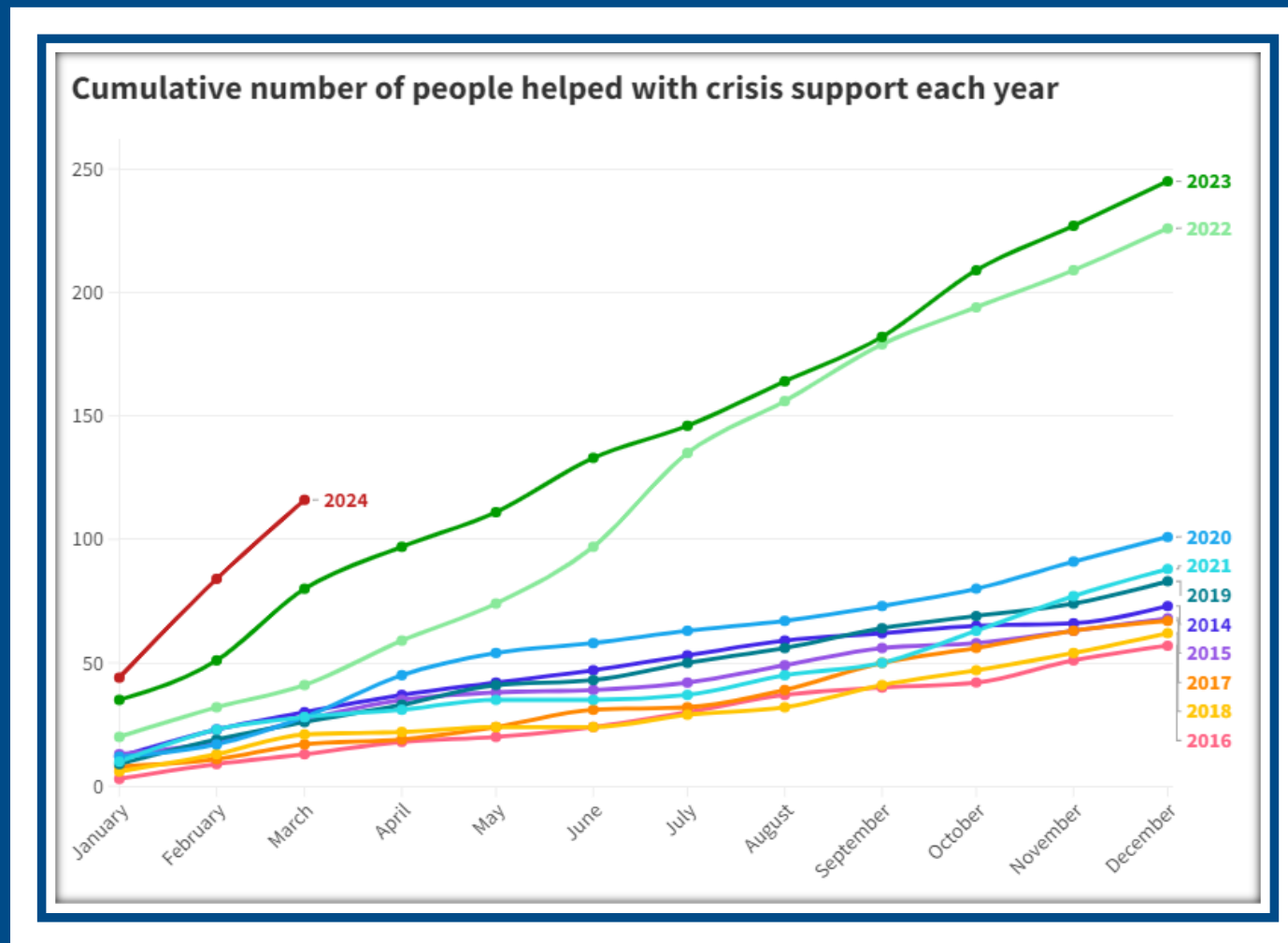
Cost-of-living related issues rising

We have helped **17%** more clients with cost-of-living related issues in 2023 than in 2022 and over **twice as many** as in 2021



The cost-of-living crisis is not over

2022 and 2023 were **record years** for clients needing crisis support. Our clients for 2024 have exceeded both these records so far



How do we provide advice?

We deliver advice through a range of channels to ensure we meet all our clients needs and preferences



46%

of our advice is delivered over the **telephone**, making or receiving over 12,000 calls



30%

of our advice is delivered via **email**



19%

of our advice is delivered in person; we held 676 **face to face** appointments in 23/24



in 24/25 we are excited to be introducing webchat as an alternative channel to get advice

Clients value our service

“The advice and time was invaluable to me. The lady who helped me understood my needs and eased my mind and in turn improved my state of mind. It was a huge weight lifted off my shoulders. This service is a lifeline, and I am eternally grateful. You are all angels to help people like me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart”

“The advisor, who I've seen on several occasions, has 'gone the extra mile' to help me and I'm so confident in his ability”

“The service provided by the volunteers is second to none”

“The help of the Citizens Advice is truly invaluable”

“My adviser was absolutely amazing - took all the stress and worry away from me which will definitely have a massive positive impact on my life and well-being. I am so grateful. I really appreciate all your help and support you guys are amazing”

“As vital as the NHS”

Client Stories

Monique* dropped into our offices in a state of distress as they had been assaulted by their landlord. They felt if they returned to their home they would be in danger. An adviser was able to arrange emergency housing within a few hours by liaising with the council homelessness department and Monique was in their own property within a month.



Timothy* came to Citizens Advice for help getting a foodbank voucher. During a discussion with one of our advisors, it was identified that Timothy struggled with reading and writing and wasn't receiving their full benefits. After working with an advisor for seven months, the client was granted multiple benefits which increased their income by nearly £1000 a month which made a huge difference to their quality of life.

Client Stories

Jack* had been on the housing register for three years waiting for a four-bed property. According to council policy the client was only entitled to a three-bed property, but our advisors identified that, due to complex needs within the household, they should be considered overcrowded. Our adviser worked with the council to explain why they should be on the priority for a larger property and Jack was subsequently moved onto band A on the housing register.



Marta* had applied for PIP but their application was turned down. They completed a Mandatory Reconsideration but were still unsuccessful. An adviser spent two years working with Marta and supporting them through the appeals process. Following this their PIP was granted for 10 years.

We take advice into the community

- Our award-winning Advice First Aid project trained **233** people to be able to deliver basic advice first aid to a range of residents across the district
- Our Outreach project takes our services into the community and has helped **224** clients in person with **414** different issues during 2023 who otherwise may not have been able to access our services
- Our Macmillan Project helped **156** clients achieve outcomes worth **£390,550**
- In partnership with Hart Foodbank, our Foodbank Project helped **60** clients with **146** issues last year, achieving outcomes worth over **£11,000**



AFA



Money Advice



Home & Well



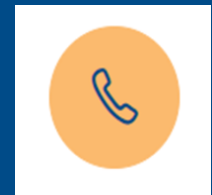
Foodbank



Macmillan



Outreach



Adviceline

We campaign

- We use our clients' experiences, stories and evidence to research and campaign for positive change both locally and nationally
- We have highlighted unfair practice within the areas of Housing, Benefits & Tax Credits, Consumer Goods & Services, Utilities & Communication and Debt
- We supported National and Local campaigns throughout the year including
 - Scams Awareness
 - The Child Trust Fund campaign
 - Benefits uprating in line with inflation
 - Renters Reform Bill
- Our CEO delivered radio interviews on BBC Radio Surrey & Sussex and we were featured on ITV Meridian News on the cost-of-living crisis and the need for funding for charities



Our strength is our team

- ✓ We are a volunteer led service - **74%** of our team are volunteers
- ✓ Last year our volunteers gave over **12,000 hours** of time which was worth over **£300k**
- ✓ Developing the skills and employability of our volunteers adds **£17k** to the economy
- ✓ Volunteering also gives value back to our volunteers with increased life satisfaction estimated to be worth over **£60k** and savings to the NHS through improved mental health of almost **£23k**

“I get to make a difference and work in a lovely supportive environment”

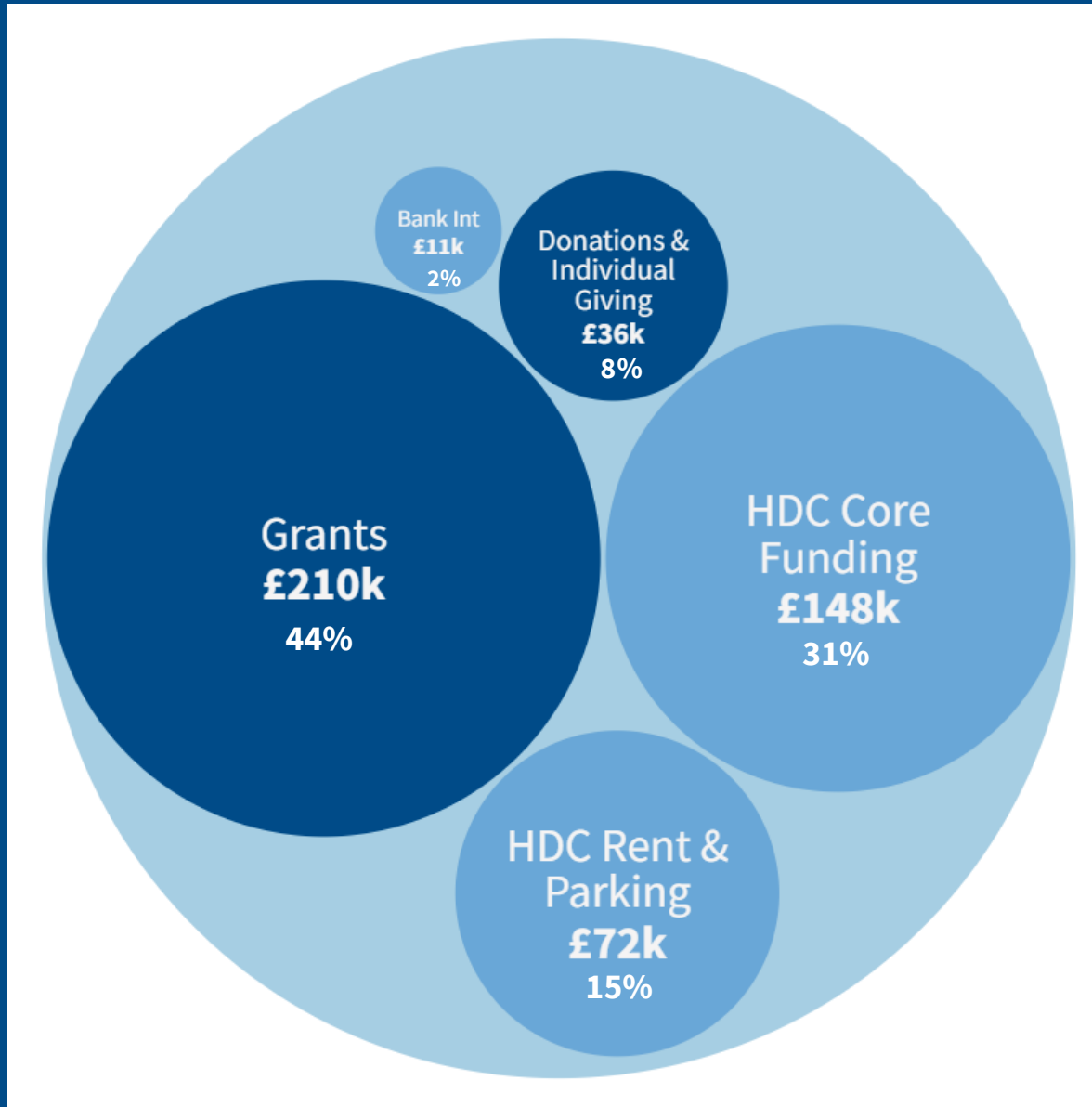
100% of our team feel we care about their wellbeing

“Incredible team spirit”

#WeAreCitizensAdvice



Funding – Income 2023/4



- 31% of income from Hart District Council discretionary grant for advice services – static for last 16 years – granted on a year-by-year basis
- 44% of income from grants to deliver projects/advice services – applied for on a rolling basis throughout the year
- No long-term funding commitment – fundraising target set on yearly basis
- Forecast expenditure 24/25 £519,733

Thank you to our local Town and Parish Councils for your support

- Church Crookham Parish Council
- Crondall Parish Council
- Crookham Village Parish Council
- Elvetham Heath Parish Council
- Eversley Parish Council
- Ewshot Parish Council
- Fleet Town Council
- Hook Parish Council
- Odiham Parish Council
- Winchfield Parish Council
- Yateley Town Council



We are an independent local charity - we couldn't do what we do without our partners and funders – thank you



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THE EMMANUEL KAYE FOUNDATION



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