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Delivered by Email

2 November 2017

Dear Ms Bevan,

### **Advice at Home Fundraising Campaign**

I volunteer with Citizens Advice Maidenhead & Windsor, the Borough wide advice charity. We provide free advice to anyone living or working across the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, and as a small local charity we are responsible for raising all of our own funding. This year we are launching our Advice at Home fundraising campaign which aims to raise £10,000 so that we can continue providing our highly-valued home visiting service over the coming years to some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

We know that access to good advice can make all the difference for people who are struggling and in recent years we have worked hard to ensure that local people across the whole Borough can access the advice they need. Our trained volunteers and staff now give advice over the phone, via the internet and via email, as well as through face to face appointments in both Maidenhead and Windsor and through our Advice at Home service for the housebound. Easier access to advice makes a real difference for people with complex problems. Common issues include serious illness, bereavement, risk of eviction, unemployment, unfair dismissal, relationship breakdown, withdrawal of benefits and, most commonly, debt. Clients are often very distressed when they contact us, and research shows that four in five people feel less stressed, depressed or anxious after our help.

Our 'Advice at Home' service provides free, trustworthy advice for the housebound, delivered in just 15 hours per week by our home visitor. This service can be life-changing for some of the most vulnerable people in our community; people who are isolated and housebound through ill health, disability, because they are elderly or who have carer responsibilities. In many cases the advice that we provide leads to improvements in both mental and physical health and enables people to access the benefits and support they are entitled to claim. In the last year we have supported 66 clients, who benefited financially by £114,493. This is the true story of our recent clients, an elderly couple we've called Beryl and John:

*Beryl and her husband John are both in their 80s. They are on a very low income and have no family living close by. John is disabled and has dementia and Beryl is his main carer, which leaves her feeling very isolated and worried. Our home visitor helped them to claim the disability benefit that John is entitled to and carried out a benefit check to boost their income with additional means tested benefits. Beryl said, "I can't thank you enough. I didn't know we could claim these benefits and wouldn't have been able to fill in*

*the difficult forms without your help. Now we can afford to pay someone to sit with John if I need to go out and we can afford the odd taxi and little treat. It has made such a difference.”*

This example shows that when people have access to good advice, they can enjoy a better quality of life, whatever their circumstances. We would like to maintain our home visiting service, however as more and more people turn to us for advice (we saw an increase of over 60% in client numbers last year) we find funding a service such as this is becoming more and more challenging.

Many of our home visiting clients have complex problems that require several visits to resolve yet we receive no specific funding for this service, which is not part of our Service Level Agreement with the Borough. We are asking Waltham St Lawrence Parish Council to consider helping to fund Advice at Home by making a regular or one off financial contribution to this service to enable us to continue to support vulnerable clients and their families or carers, who could not access the advice they need in any other way. Every visit our home visitor makes has the potential to change the life of a local couple like Beryl and John for the better. Our home visitor is assisted in this by a team of volunteer administrators, based in our office in Maidenhead, so funding would help us with their training needs.

I would really appreciate it if you could consider supporting us, and we would be very happy to come and talk to you and your colleagues about our service if that would be of interest. We would be pleased to provide leaflets about our work to keep local people informed if this would be useful.

I have attached our latest Community Impact Report for your reference, and please let me know if you would like any further information.

Yours sincerely

*Sandra Robinson*

Sandra Robinson  
Volunteer, Citizens Advice Maidenhead & Windsor

Enc Community Impact Report 2016-17