



## **Citizens Advice helps thousands of people with mental health problems in the South-East.**

The number of people in the South-East with mental health problems who asked Citizens Advice for help in the past year reached 14,000. On average, each person needed advice with five different issues.

A new survey from Citizens Advice has found that compared to the previous year mental health practitioners are spending more appointment time on non-health issues such as debt or housing.

**8 in 10 practitioners surveyed said they had less time to deliver clinical care after being asked to assist with tasks like writing up debt management plans and contacting public service bodies.**

Some Citizens Advice offices run advice sessions in GP surgeries and hospitals to allow health professionals to focus on treatment, and help people tackle practical problems which can cause or contribute to their poor mental health.

**In 2017-18 so far, Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead has helped more than 1900 new clients with a mental health problem out of a total of 3220.**

Elaine Parr, District Manager, Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead, said:

*“Practical problems such as debt can be more difficult to manage if you also have mental health problems.*

*“This new research shows mental health professionals too often spending appointment time helping patients with wider problems. It’s essential that people with mental health problems have access to appropriate practical support in their community.”*

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### **Notes for editors**

1. Elaine Parr is available for interview. Please call 01737 778383.

2. Citizens Advice conducted an online survey of 244 mental health practitioners from Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services from 10/01/2018 to 06/02/2018. Citizens Advice directly contacted IAPT providers across England to distribute the survey. The providers then shared it directly with practitioners via email and on social media. Citizens Advice also worked with Association of Mental Health Providers, Royal College of Psychiatrists, and The British Psychological Society to design and distribute the survey.

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