

Civil Rights First

2021/22

Legal Rights Charity

Accountability

Outcomes

Equalities

Resources

Rights

Respect

Fairness

Choice

Transparency

Challenge

Control

Resolution

Information

Autonomy

Solutions

Annual Report

Scottish Charity No: SC048403. Company Limited by Guarantee: SC594829

Registered with the Financial Conduct Authority: 801521

We aim to promote social justice with delivery to everyone in society, through a valued, tailored advice and effective advocacy service.

Civil Rights First provides **FREE** advice and advocacy to all citizens, on a range of areas including money advice. We have provided this service since our launch in May 2018. In 2020 our vision is on growing our charity further. We are currently delivering our much-needed service remotely during the pandemic.

Providing Effective Advocacy/Advice/Representation on the following:

Effective Advocacy

Money Advice/Housing Issues

Mortgage and tenancy repossession

Consumer Rights

Self-Directed Support

Legal Advice Civil

Information on legal rights, human rights and equalities legislation Authorised Lay Representation

How we assist.

CRF provides advice and information on legal rights.

We undertake casework on your behalf to support resolution of more complex issues.

In some instances, we provide Authorised Lay Representation representing you at Court or Tribunal,

We refer individual cases if beyond our scope.

CONTACT: 07703 410 584. info@civilrightsfirst.co.uk

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Founder Report

This is our second Civil Rights First Annual Report for the Financial Year ending 31st March 2021, this year has presented with many positive outcomes for CRF with our successful funding approved in August 2021 by Scottish Government and Inspiring Scotland for three years under the Equality and Human Rights Fund. We are all extremely grateful in this recognition of our positive work and look forward to making a real difference with this step change for CRF.

CRF is in its infancy and scraping the surface of what is possible with such a diverse and unprecedented service delivery. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in our service being needed more so than ever, this continues to resonate even further than anticipated post pandemic. CRF provides a **FREE** service, hence our much-needed support from statutory agencies, grant funders and donations which are all hugely appreciated. Holistic is one of our core organisational values and strengths, we are both person centred, and solutions based in our approach to every case we undertake. Justice comes in many forms, finding a positive solution with evaluation and monitoring is key to our service delivery. We deliver with gold standard advice and representation, which is our priority, this results in all enquiries receiving a high standard of advice and or signposting to other relevant organisations.

Civil Rights First is providing a holistic and innovative approach, while making a real difference in social justice at present. We provide effective advice and advocacy to all citizens, where access to justice and money advice is paramount. We have provided this service since our launch in May 2018. In 2021 our vision is to grow our charity further with robust sustainability from our recent Equality and Human Rights Funding. We are focussed on greater scope of consultation with virtual meetings across an even greater geographical area, with limited travel costs, we have reduced miles while offering person centred advice and advocacy to a wider audience, benefiting both the clients and the charity. This new innovative method of service delivery ensures we reach all our clients in a timely manner, our service delivery offers choice and accessibility to everyone, including isolated clients who would otherwise be struggling to access advice services.

CRF is both robust and sustainable, while connecting digitally has demonstrated positive outcomes. It is noted barriers still exist with exclusions and inequality for those who do not have access digitally. Therefore, partnership working is crucial, organisations working with vulnerable groups can enable further accessibility for vital advice services. Recognising many of the benefits with digital visions, the focus is working with all agencies and partnerships across communities, money advice and social care services, this is central to our continued success. Our service delivery is:

Specific: Delivery of advice and effective advocacy for vulnerable people. Financial Capability is delivered to vulnerable individuals giving people the power to make informed choice and improve their lives. This is achieved by addressing all factors, increasing knowledge and self-determination. Enabling and empowering with advice and representation.

Measurable: Civil Rights First delivery in 2021 with over 100 beneficiaries benefited and supported with client financial gain of over 500,000.00. Evaluating this service fully, the inclusion of other family members who benefit from our service.

Impact:

Partnership working with other agencies and organisations to reach a much wider number of people with shared learning outcomes to strengthen future delivery of this service. CRF is a member with National Organisations to reach full capacity.

Achievable: Targets are estimated on the present enquiries and case load.

Delivered by one specialist adviser in 2021, with 2nd Specialist Adviser in 2022. And Admin support.

Relevant : Geographic limitations: other agencies are often restricted, for instance Citizens Advice Bureaux by local authority boundaries. Civil Rights First operates without restriction. Specialist Roles: Agencies generally employ several staff for different roles. Civil Rights First advisers have a vast array of knowledge and skills combined with a wealth of experience to fulfil several roles including Authorised Lay Representation.

Time Bound : Funding enables Civil Rights First to evidence a positive impact within the targets stated. All clients have multiple positive outcomes unless they withdraw; this will be either with direct assistance from the CRF or with signposting to appropriate organisations to enable a positive long-term outcome. All data is recorded in line with GDPR, enabling future policy development.

CASE STUDY Client A: a young person with Cerebral Palsy transitioning from school was prevented from attending college after transition from Secondary School with no budget to support. CRF provided advice and advocacy to the family and negotiated with the Local Authority to secure a budget for a three-day placement at college with one to one support. CRF provided further representation in negotiations with LA to secure funding with an initial SDS budget totalling £68,000.00 per annum. This enabled the vulnerable young person to attend college with a client Financial Gain 68,000.00 to live a full and supported life within the local community.

We are an innovative charity with excellent strategic planning, the demands are extensive and considerable, market research has evidenced this widely. We have sustainability strategies; however, it is necessary to grow in fluidity within the present changing landscapes. CRF has a robust sustainability policy; CRF Policy Statement is follows: As a result of ongoing public sector austerity, there has been a major shift in business models. Public trust is Civil Rights First's most valuable asset, it is vital to protect it together with the fundamental aims and objectives from dilution or deflection. For continuity Civil Rights First must constantly review its funding strategies for a diverse means of income generation to mitigate reliance upon grant funding sources. Although sustainability poses challenges to both finance and reputation, Civil Rights First will always consider ALL sources of funding, including grants, donations, fundraising events and within our five-year strategic planning with the future for long term sustainability of the charity.

The delivery of our specialist advice service is presently delivered with dedication to helping others which is key to our values-based approach. In 2022 we would like to expand our service and recruit more specialist advisers and part-time administrative

staff; this is possible with our much needed funding success from Equality and Human Rights Fund.

A considerable amount of management time is spent on funding applications and securing necessary core funds to maintain our gold standard service. There is increasing demand for our advice services, please see our case studies and client financial gain.

Moreover, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our board who play a vital role in the governance, direction, and vision for CRF. Providing due diligence with governance guaranteeing compliance with policy and procedure with recommended guidance under the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

Thank you all for your dedication and hard work. Keep well and stay safe.



Dionne McCabe

Chairman's Report for year 2021

CIVIL RIGHTS FIRST (CRF)

Chairman's Report for 2021.

For organisations and individuals alike 2021 has been a journey into the unknown. Covid:19 has continued to have a monumental impact on our lives, working practices, and the service delivery for almost every profession. In this uncertain time, CRF has been able to show a genuine resilience in the face of adversity, and have made considerable progress throughout the year with the charity's core aims at its forefront.

CRF have established strong partnerships with neighbouring Third Sector organisations in our involvement with the Advocacy Plus Project. This project has given CRF a further platform in directly working with vulnerable people in our community. This frontline work has been managed effectively by our Charity Director Dionne McCabe. We are now in a position where there is evidence of positive outcomes for our clients as a direct result of CRF's involvement, as seen on the case studies on our website. Our implementation of online outreach is a prime example of the diverse service and skillset that we are able to offer. With the increase in workload Dionne and the Board are in agreement that recruitment of an admin assistant and a specialist advisor will be important moving forward.

The pursuit of Grant applications have been an important aspect of the sustainability of CRF. In the past year CRF has acted to implement a strategy in which the pursuit of Grant applications is more effective and streamlined by sourcing a third party to pursue said applications. This has been very effective, as seen with more successful applications: notably with the Equality and Human Rights Fund which will provide funding over the course of the next three years. These actions are in keeping with the ethos of our charity as more time is afforded to frontline work with our clients.

This, alongside funding through statutory agencies and donations is giving CRF a clear and viable financial footing which we aim to build on.

The upcoming year is likely to share similar themes of uncertainty as the last; however with the continued hard work of Dionne McCabe and our Board of Trustees, Civil Rights First can look forward with optimism and enthusiasm for what lies ahead.



James Brown
Chairman
30th November 2021

Advocacy Plus Project

Civil Rights First is still breaking new ground with our advice service and delivery approach to Scotland's most vulnerable members of society. We are making a real difference with our Advocacy project providing a wide range of support services to informal carers and those in receipt of social care at all levels. We work primarily with communities who experience marginalisation due to ethnicity, age and other protected characteristics. This rights-based project supports social care needs to realise new rights and entitlements conferred by the Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013. It is aimed at individuals entitled to SDS, empowering them to live their best lives. We provide advice and information on legal rights under self-directed support with more complex case work being undertaken with advocacy. Individuals having difficulty with reviews or complaints process are assisted. Information is provided on a case by case process through the assessment and planning process, including informed choice on options available under the current legislation. Should a review have resulted in a reduction to budget we provide advocacy to reach a positive outcome for each case. The project accepts referrals from both individuals requiring support and Third Sector organisations helping individuals with SDS. We work in partnership with In Control Scotland, Radical Visions and Housing Options Scotland. In addition, CRF provides an online advice and information workshops to Self-Directed Support Scotland (SDSS) for member organisations across Scotland. A further 4-6 online sessions is planned for 2022.

Specific: Delivery of advice and effective advocacy for vulnerable people on Self-Directed Support. Financial Capability is delivered to vulnerable individuals giving people the power to make the most of their budgets and improve their lives. This is achieved by addressing all factors, increasing knowledge and self-determination.

Measurable: Civil Rights First delivery of this Advice project, in 2020/21 over 100 beneficiaries have benefited and supported with client financial gain of over 500,000.00.

Impact:

Partnership working with other agencies and organisations to reach a much wider number of people with shared learning outcomes to strengthen future delivery of this service. CRF is a member of Self Direct Support Scotland and Advice UK.

Achievable: Targets are estimated on the present project. Project is delivered by a specialist adviser.

Relevant : Geographic limitations: other agencies are often restricted, for instance

Citizens Advice Bureaux by local authority boundaries. Civil Rights First operates without restriction. Specialist Roles: Agencies generally employ a number of staff for different roles. Civil Rights First advisers have a vast array of knowledge and skills combined with a wealth of experience to fulfil a number of roles including Authorised Lay Representation.

Time Bound : Funding for this project enables Civil Rights First to evidence a positive impact within the targets stated. All clients have multiple positive outcomes unless they withdraw; this will be either with direct assistance from the CRF project or with signposting to appropriate organisations to enable a positive long-term outcome. All data is recorded in line with GDPR, enabling future policy development.

Money Advice

We provide Money Advice with delivery of our money advice service offering transformation and accessibility with digital access and income maximisation, monitoring and evaluation with Money Advice Scotland and Financial Conduct Authority regulations. CRF delivers under:

Specific: Delivery of money advice and effective advocacy for vulnerable people. Financial Capability is delivered to vulnerable individuals giving people the power improves their lives.

Measurable: Civil Rights First delivery of this Advice for clients. Individuals are supported with client financial gain.

Impact: Partnership working with other agencies to reach a much wider number of people with shared learning outcomes to strengthen future delivery of this service.

Achievable: Targets are estimated on the present money advice. Project will be delivered by one specialist adviser.

Relevant: Geographic limitations: other agencies are often restricted, for instance Citizens Advice Bureaux by local authority boundaries. Civil Rights First will operate without restriction. Specialist Roles: Agencies generally employ a number of staff for different roles. Civil Rights First advisors have a vast array of knowledge and skills combined with a wealth of experience to fulfil a number of roles including Authorised Lay Representation.

Time Bound: Funding for the 6-month forecast enables Civil Rights First to evidence a positive impact within the targets state. All clients will have a positive outcome unless they withdraw; this will be either with direct assistance from the CRF project or with signposting to appropriate organisations to enable a positive long-term outcome. All data will be recorded in line with GDPR, enabling future policy development.

Civil Rights First provides **FREE** effective advice and advocacy to all citizens with no geographical restrictions, where access to justice and money advice is paramount. We have provided this service since our launch in May 2018. Information, advice and representation is provided to everyone in relation to civil matters. Based on the broad knowledge, skills and our services are delivered under the broad categories of advice, negotiation, representation and policy development as follows: Advice: specialist advisers provide a gold standard of service. Negotiation: resolving matters amicably we communicate effectively with other agencies and parties: Our core value is to negotiate with parties using the principles of Best Alternative to Negotiate Agreement (BATNA), advising on preferred outcomes for our clients and converting to practical solutions. Representation: we provide a unique service to everyone

within Scotland, making services more accessible to all citizens, including the most vulnerable. We provide free specialist Authorised Lay Representation where our unique service fulfils an unmet need in dedicated legal services giving practical effect to the legal process, enabling everyone to participate and take part in the decision-making process within an inclusive society. Policy Development: contributes to the development of Scotland's legislative framework in line with evidenced case work and continuous improvement. The charity aims work with a project monitoring group to steer the money advice project with direction in best practice. The group will develop and inform those agencies who campaign for fairer rights and a more just decision-making process.

CRF is utilising innovation with greater consultation volume, building on mobilisation plans to ensure service delivery and transformation offering choice and accessibility reducing miles and offering person centred care in a new innovative manner in advice delivery in Scotland. It is recognised there are both benefits and barriers to digital connectiveness. Notwithstanding it will broaden access for vulnerable groups with disabilities identified. Recognising many benefits with the overarching digital vision working with all agencies and partnerships across communities and social care services where sharing and learning are at the fore.

Civil Rights First delivers advice tailored to individual needs, increasing financial resilience where possible and maximizing income. CRF advocates and protects everyone's rights through values of equality and diversity. We are a unique charitable service with advisers fully equipped proven in legal and money advice. Our service is bespoke, case work from initial contact to resolution alleviates stress for the client and provides a professional service with positive resolution and outcomes for all. Moreover, our prevention, intervention and support approach aim to:

- Identify and target priority groups within the over-indebted population.
- Prevent problems before they reach crisis point.
- Intervene when people are unable to resolve problems themselves. Support vulnerable people to resolve their problems through case work, services and representation.
- Increase the financial gains secured for clients.
- Provide a remedy and solutions-based approach to all case work.

FUNDRAISING

Thank you for all your kind and generous donations, with continued support from our main funders and memberships organisations. Thank you for believing in us.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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moneyadviceScotland
Scotland's Money Charity

advice UK
CELEBRATING 40 YEARS