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| https://mcusercontent.com/cbddd70249007c59aff38292e/images/188432fc-287b-7d00-7bc7-b39ad9ca212d.png**In Touch With You**Summer 2021Welcome to our summer issue of 'In Touch with You'. As restrictions are lifted and government support measures come to an end, more people than ever need our help to navigate the financial and employment landscape of our post-Covid economy. In this issue, we cover employee rights if you are working from home; provide a snapshot of how we have helped local residents access the Covid Winter grant; and provide some tips for young people struggling with debt.Please do get in touch if there is anything you'd like to see in the newsletter. We wish you a safe and enjoyable summer. |

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| **Back to the workplace:Your rights if you’ve been working from home**Here is what you need to know if you’re asked to return to your normal workplace. **I’ve been working from home, can my employer ask me to return to my normal workplace?**Yes. When you enter into a contract to work for an employer you have to comply with ‘reasonable management requests’. That means your employer can ask you to return to your normal workplace if your original contract specified that you would be office-based or based elsewhere. In practice and where possible, many employers are actively encouraging a blended working model with employees spending part of the week working from home and part in the workplace. You can ask to continue working from home, but that doesn't mean your employer has to agree. Start by having an open conversation about your wishes, and consider making a flexible working request, which is a legal right all employees have. You can include your reasons why working from home may be better for you and how it might also help the business. **What can I do if I’m worried about Covid security at work?**Your employer has a legal duty under the law, and under your contract, to ensure that your workplace does not pose a risk to your health and safety. Current guidance says employers should complete a Covid risk assessment and take steps to prevent transmission, including frequent cleaning and social distancing. This is due to be updated. While wearing a mask in an enclosed space will no longer be mandatory, employers will still be free to set their own policies which might include requiring workers or customers to wear masks. If you are unhappy with safety measures at your workplace, you should discuss them with your employer. Ideally, it is best if any issue can be resolved amicably. If this is not possible and you feel your employer is not meeting their health and safety responsibilities, you could report them to the Health and Safety Executive.**I’m uncomfortable about taking public transport, what are my options?**Your employer’s duty is limited to matters that are under its control. There is therefore no clear legal position about whether employers have to take into account the risks you face when travelling to and from work. That said, your employer should listen to your concerns if you’re worried about having to use public transport. You should try to reach an arrangement that you’re comfortable with, for example, asking to travel at quieter times of the day. **What happens if I need to self-isolate?**You shouldn’t go into work if you're self-isolating because you have coronavirus symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus. You must tell your employer that you have to self-isolate. It’s worth telling them in writing so you have a record for later use. If you’re unable to work from home, you may be entitled to benefits, sick pay or a self-isolation payment of £500 from your local council.  Remember that the rules on self-isolating are changing. From 16 August, if you've had your second vaccination, you won't need to self-isolate even if you have been in contact with someone who's tested positive for coronavirus. However, if you have symptoms you will need to self-isolate until you test negative. |

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| **Reaching every corner of our districts**Did you know we are a local charity, not part of central or local government? Did you know we help residents in every corner of South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse districts? Did you know that 80% of our workforce are volunteers?Find out more about who we are and what we do in our impact presentation. This includes maps of where our clients come from.[https://mcusercontent.com/cbddd70249007c59aff38292e/files/cb62ea2c-a187-f01d-1dab-91257d4374c1/Citizens\_Advice\_Oxfordshire\_South\_and\_Vale\_our\_impact\_2020\_21.pdf](https://osavcab.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=cbddd70249007c59aff38292e&id=f09896dc0a&e=c8fd67fa5f)For further information, please get in touch with Jon Bright, Director jon.bright@osavcab.org.uk |

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| **Oxfordshire millennials grapple with debt**Meeting living costs as Covid restrictions are lifted is more of a challenge than ever for some households.  The situation is particularly tough for some young adults trying to find a foothold on the employment ladder when jobs are scarce and housing expensive. Many continue to live at home with parents, applying for job after job in a competitive employment market.Without a job or parental support, some get into serious debt, succumbing to the glittering offers of ready credit (“buy online now, pay later”), loan sharks and sometimes borrowing much more than they can ever pay back.If you are in this position or know someone who is, start putting things right today. Think about ways to earn extra income and cut your living costs. Make a firm resolution to be careful. Confine your spending to essentials and try to stop buying things you don’t need. Take stock of your overall situation by making a complete list of your debts and exactly how much you owe.The debt and money section of the [Citizens Advice website](https://osavcab.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=cbddd70249007c59aff38292e&id=40466ba7f1&e=c8fd67fa5f) includes a useful [budgeting tool](https://osavcab.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=cbddd70249007c59aff38292e&id=b45c0950be&e=c8fd67fa5f).Other helpful websites:[www.youngmoneyblog.co.uk](https://osavcab.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=cbddd70249007c59aff38292e&id=540d728ffe&e=c8fd67fa5f)[www.moneyexpert.com](https://osavcab.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=cbddd70249007c59aff38292e&id=233414703d&e=c8fd67fa5f)Our advisers can help you prioritise debts like council tax, utility bills, mortgage or rent. Our Adviceline is free and confidential. Call us today on 0808 278 7907. |

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| https://mcusercontent.com/cbddd70249007c59aff38292e/images/7823a6af-9621-c321-a67b-a0ed751356e9.png**We are here to help**     Adviceline is open from     Monday to Friday 9am-5pm  **Adviceline: 0808 278 7907**   |

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| **Get in touch**If you have any feedback about the newsletter, or would like to suggest a topic for us to cover, please get in touch at communications@osavcab.org.uk **About Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South and Vale**Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South and Vale is an independent charity that provides the local Citizens Advice service. Our 114 skilled volunteers work from 4 locations (Abingdon, Didcot, Henley and Thame) and 4 outreaches in two locations (Faringdon and Wallingford) and are supported by 15 FTE staff. We advised over 8,000 clients in 2020/21. All our core income is raised locally. We are very grateful to the two District Councils, the Town Councils, numerous Parish Councils and local charities for their continued support.     |

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| *Copyright © 2020 Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South and Vale, all rights reserved.***Our mailing address is:**communications@osavcab.org.ukCitizens Advice Oxfordshire South & Vale, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon OX14 3JD |

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