"LET THE PEOPLE KNOW"

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Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Acknowledgments
- Appendix 2 - Lothian Region Structure Plan Report: Shopping Hierarchy Map
- Appendix 3 - Advice Agencies in Designated Areas in Strathclyde Region
This is a paper for discussion at two seminars - Glasgow on 30th April, 1977 and Inverness on 28th May, 1977 - to be attended by those concerned in information and advice services in Scotland. It is only after those seminars that we shall finalise the report and its recommendations. We hope that any factual errors or omissions will be picked up there. The discussion paper still presents, we fear, an incomplete picture of a subject which is constantly changing and without any clear form. If our own difficulties in getting full information are anything to go by, then Scottish consumers do indeed have problems in knowing where to go for advice and information. So at least we have already half proved our point! We hope that the full discussion process of the seminars will help to firm-up the rapidly changing and often obscure scene that we are trying to describe. Our final report will then contain recommendations formulated, we hope, in the seminars for a system whereby the Scottish people may have easy access to the information they need in order to move confidently through the rules and regulations of our time.

We owe a great many people a great deal of gratitude for their help in collecting material for this paper. Most of these are listed at Annex One. We thank them all. In particular the Council would also like to express appreciation to its Research Officer, Adrian Shaw, who has pulled all the strands together with patient determination and skill.

JOAN MACINTOSH
Chairman
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The development of an adequate network of advice for consumers in Scotland is an issue of fundamental concern to the Scottish Consumer Council. The Government White Paper "National Consumers' Agency" (Cmdn 5726) which preceded the establishment of the National Consumer Council and its associated Councils in Scotland and Wales, stated that the functions of the Councils would include making representations "...on the adequacy and availability of consumer advice services". The White Paper also indicated that the Councils should be concerned with the interests of consumers in relation not only to commercial goods and services but also to central and local government goods and services. It follows that our concern must be that Scottish consumers should have access to sound advice on, for example, housing, legal and social security problems, as well as on problems connected with commercial goods and services.

1.2 The Need for Advice Agencies

We are all governed at every turn of our lives by complex and often obscure legislation and administrative procedures. The infinite variety of ways in which advice may be needed can be illustrated in the records of any general advice agency. Broadly, it must cover the variety of roles in which all of us as individuals have needs and responsibilities. A man may be at one and the same time a householder, an employee, a father, a husband, a taxpayer, a ratepayer, a neighbour, a car owner, a sportsman, an elector, and so on. In any and all of these roles he will certainly need at some time to know more precisely his rights and duties. Where does he go for answers? The average consumer cannot have at his fingertips the range of up-to-date knowledge that is needed to cope. Nor do his friends, colleagues and family. Sources of information exist, but they are as many and various as the problems. Answers may come instantly to hand or be so elusive that we give up looking. It is a matter of luck, we say. Yet that luck may determine important decisions in our life. And 'luck' may be less easily available to the disadvantaged than to others. We therefore argue the need for an adequate network of advice agencies as a normal part of the resources available to every citizen - as normal as education and libraries.

1.3 It has to be said at the outset that the giving of advice is an aspect of very many social relationships. At the most informal level, friends, colleagues, relatives and neighbours give advice, solicited and unsolicited, accurate and inaccurate, on a whole range of matters. Some professionals, notably doctors, social workers, ministers, policemen and solicitors, are also looked on as sources of general advice on
subjects far outside their sphere of professional practice. These sources of advice are all — and rightly — outside the range of any 'quality control' and the most that may be said is that full information and advice ought to be readily available to these informal advisers as well as to the advised. At a more official level, most councillors and MPs nowadays give advice to constituents at regular 'surgeries' on a very wide range of subjects, including personal as well as public problems. These advisers are generally — or ought to be — very well aware of sources of accurate information and are in a position to use them freely. In addition many people working in agencies supplying consumers with goods and services (both commercial and governmental) are expected to give advice on the narrower range of information in which they are required to be expert. For example, a consumer would certainly expect a furniture salesman to advise him on the merits and durability of a 3-piece suite and an unemployed man would expect a social security officer to advise him on the benefits for which he should apply. These sources of advice are ultimately the responsibility of managers and employers who have to see that their staff are trained to supply such help.

1.4 All those are normal examples of the daily advice available to us. But are they adequate? The thirst for information exists. The public seems to look for more and more advice in its daily round. Thence presumably arises the increasing popularity of personal advice columns in newspapers, magazines, radio and T.V., these ranging from advice for the lovelorn and others with acute personal problems, to advice for correspondents with enquiries about consumer, financial, housing, health and other problems. The popularity of these features is a clear example of the public appetite for advice and information. But the impossibility of adequately explaining a complex problem in a letter — let alone of replying to it adequately in two inches or two minutes — limits the value of such advice sources.

1.5 At para 1.2 above we explained why we believe that advice is essential to help all of us, ordinary consumers, in coping with the pressures and demands of modern society. There is a special urgency, however, for disadvantaged members of the community. Advice, like so many things, is more easily available to those with money than those without. Yet the poor and the disadvantaged need advice on an even greater range of subjects than others. Where can they go? How do we in Scotland ensure that people are no more deprived of information than they are of food? The Welfare State with its web of 45 means tested benefits (for details see NCC report "Means Tested Benefits") is a prime example of the complexity and obscurity of citizens' rights. The take-up rates for certain means tested benefits are just one (admittedly rough) indication of our failure to put across quite factual information to the people who need it. The official estimate for the take-up of rate rebates by those entitled to them
is 62% of rent allowances (unfurnished) 30-35%; of rent allowances (furnished) 10%. How many people even know the difference between rent rebates and rent allowances? Although the "stigma" which some potential recipients feel attaches to means tested benefits is a factor in the 'take-up' failure, sheer lack of information and advice about such benefits may be equally or more responsible.

1.6 Advice agencies, while useful to everyone, are especially important for low income consumers who do not have access to paid professional advisers. The Scottish Consumer Council has argued (in a letter of 24 November, 1976 to the President of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) that advice agencies have become a vital necessity at this time of economic recession. We have been deeply concerned by signs that in their desperate search for economies local authorities are inclined to reduce existing advice services. It is our view that as the economic squeeze grips tighter, and inflation continues, the public needs a quality and quantity of advice never before required, except in time of war. The short-term situation therefore accentuates the long-term need for an adequate advice network.

1.7 Advice agencies at this time of severe economic constraints are crucial and their role cannot be properly assumed by other sources of advice. What special characteristics do advice agencies have that cannot be duplicated in some other form? First, advice agencies, by their very nature, are there to advise consumers and do not regard this as a sometimes tiresome and always time-consuming ancillary to their main functions. They are free and they can be consulted without inhibition. There is no stigma attached to their services. Second, their workers are, or should be, trained and experienced in giving advice. Analysing the real nature and range of a consumer's problem is not a task that most officials or more informal sources of advice usually have either the skill or time to undertake. Third, advice agencies are, or ought to be, open for most of the week: people do not therefore have to "store up" problems. The more vital a problem is, the more urgent is its solution. Fourth, a common problem at this time of re-organisation and centralisation is that consumers simply do not know which office they should approach on a particular problem: advice agencies can help people to find their way through state and private sector bureaucracies. Fifth, advice agencies are not personally engaged in providing the services about which their enquirers are seeking advice; as a result they can approach consumer problems more dispassionately than the workers actually providing services (e.g. DSS Offices, shops). In particular they can be a valuable source of second opinions regarding disputed "rulings" and in this regard they can provide an essential safety valve for profound (if not always justified) feelings of bitterness and injustice. Sixth,
but this should particularly apply to the non-official agencies - they are confidential and the individual can confide secrets freely and without fear of them being passed along some official line to their disadvantage.

1.8
We believe therefore that there is a need for more agencies specifically engaged in advice giving as a major, or sole, activity. Properly used such agencies can be used to inform all the other sources of advice to which we have referred. It is on these agencies alone that we propose to concentrate in this report. Chapter 4 describes the main agencies in Scotland - Citizens Advice Bureaux, Local Authority agencies, Neighbourhood Centres, Consumer Advice Centres, Housing Advice Centres, Planning Centres and some other smaller agencies.

1.9
It is not only the sources of advice that are complex. We also have to define what we mean by "advice". Rosalind Brooke in "Information and Advice Services" (1972) distinguished the following activities under the general heading of "advice giving":

(i) **Informing** - the simple transmission of information (e.g. telling a pensioner where he can collect concessionary bus tickets).

(ii) **Advising** - this usually has an information content but goes further in directing information towards the consumer's personal needs and sometimes specifically suggesting that one course of action might be better than another (e.g. persuading a consumer that she should try to settle a dispute over faulty goods with the trader before taking legal action).

(iii) **Referral** - i.e. to another agency, by the first source of advice approached. This referral might be from an agency such as a local authority information centre to a "specialist" agency, such as a Consumer Advice Centre, or to a professional, such as a solicitor.

(iv) **Action** - doing something on behalf of the client, over and above giving information and advice (e.g. writing letters or representing the client at a Supplementary Benefits tribunal).

(v) **Feedback** - analysing evidence revealed by cases reported to the agency and reporting results to the appropriate authorities or publicising social needs, questionable policies, or defects in the administration of services (e.g. repeated complaints on condensation from people on a Council Housing Scheme might lead to representations to the local Council).

1.10 Many of the advice agencies studied for this report perform most, if not all, of these "advice" activities. However, there are variations between them. For example, some local authority agencies are inhibited about the degree of action they feel they can take on behalf of a client. On the other hand, some 'action' oriented centres may be rather short on information
information/ resources. The range of work undertaken by the various categories of advice agencies will be examined in Chapter 4. We are concerned about the availability of all types of advice activity.

1.11 Finally, the focus in our Report is on the provision of advice to individual consumers, rather than to groups. Obviously the handling of individual problems can have "feedback" effects which may eventually lead to changes in public policy and have important effects on whole communities. Our approach, however, has been to concentrate in this report on the degree to which advice agencies are available to help individuals, within existing legal and policy constraints. We recognise, nevertheless, that there is a need increasingly expressed by organised community associations for advice and information on ways to improve their situation by influencing legislation and social policies. We do not under-rate the importance of the latter role for advice agencies, but the scope of "community advice" is a substantial subject all on its own and we considered that our first objective must be care for the advice resources of individuals. We hope that discussion of the Report, however, may lead us on to the other area of community advice which is so closely concerned with community action.
CHAPTER 2

QUESTIONS FOR THE LOCAL ADVICE NETWORK

2.1 What are we looking for in the advise services of Scotland? This Report does not so much set out to give the answers, as to ask the questions. We need to know more, first, about the effectiveness of our present advice services. What do people look for when they seek advice and what clues do we have to their preferences for one sort of advice against another? We need to establish criteria for estimating the accessibility of advice services; the balance of advantage between specialist and generalist services; the quality of advice provided; finally, the balance of advantage between non-official and official sources - the "independence" factor.

2.2 First, there is the question, when is an advice agency adequately accessible? How and where do people want to find their advice sources? In this context there is evidence that most people prefer to contact advice agencies by calling personally. An NCC Survey undertaken for its report on Nationalised Industry Consumer Councils* asked how people preferred to make contact with advice centres. It was found that 65% of the sample preferred contact in person, 15% by letter and 14% by telephone. This evidence is supported by a preliminary report prepared for the NCC's Local Advice report suggesting that people are only prepared to travel a very limited distance in order to visit an advice agency. Of a sample of visitors to a variety of "generalist" advice agencies in selected London boroughs, 75% lived within one mile of the agency; 40% of visitors to "specialist" agencies lived equally close to the agency used. It may well be argued that the survey may not be applicable elsewhere. London as a whole is rather better provided with advice services than most other parts of Britain, particularly Scotland. Nevertheless, though the conclusions should not be taken too far, they do reflect advice workers' experience that there is an effective limit on any agency's catchment area. Citizens Advice Bureaux in Inverness and Aberdeen, for instance, cannot reasonably be regarded as servicing the whole of the Regions around them.

2.3 If people will not go far for advice and if it is important to reach them - particularly those "in need" - then a policy providing for advice agencies in every community would seem to be a key priority in the problem of support for those living in deprived areas. But how do we interpret "community"? Peripheral housing schemes face obvious problems regarding access to city centre advice agencies; they tend to have fewer car owners than elsewhere, and bus journeys into city centres are expensive as well as time-consuming. Should every housing scheme have an advice agency provided at the planning stage? We have already argued that low-income consumers have a special need for the services of advice agencies. How accessible are such

* "Consumers and the Nationalised Industries" (HMSO 1976)
such agencies to areas of deprivation? Should we think in terms of advice areas in every designated area of need? The multitude of "communities" needing advice centres is almost unlimited. Would it be more realistic to think in terms of advice agencies in centres used for major (generally weekly) shopping trips by several or many "communities"? Such a policy could bring advice sources within the effective range of most consumers. Shopping Centres certainly do not provide the convenience for immediate contact of a neighbourhood centre; but shopping trips are an essential feature of most people's lives and can usually be arranged in the event of an urgent problem arising.

2.4 Shopping centres vary in the size and the range of facilities available within them. Regional Reports in dealing with shopping patterns, distinguish between types of shopping centre according to the range of retail and other services available. Lothian Region's shopping "hierarchy"* - with Regional, sub-regional, district and 'local centres' - provides a good illustration of the possible range of shopping centres. The hierarchy of shopping centres could be the basis for a corresponding hierarchy of advice centres - ranging from large generalist and specialist agencies in a regional centre to a small generalist advice office in a small local shopping centre. In this way consumers would be able to contact advice agencies at least during major shopping trips. The likely distribution of advice under such a plan can be seen from the Lothian map. Its most obvious weakness is the wide rural hinterland unprovided for - even in a Region which does not include vast remote areas.

2.5 There are obviously special problems regarding information services in rural areas. From one point of view rural areas are more self-sufficient than crowded cities. As one Planning Officer wrote - he has only to arrive in the island for everyone to know and get in touch. However, the difficulties described in para 1.2 are common to us all, wherever we live. The difference lies in the type of advice service suitable. Various alternatives to fixed location agencies have been tried out in rural areas throughout Britain. For instance:

(i) Mobile advice services, as used by Strathclyde and Lothian Regional Councils as part of their consumer advice service or by Stirling District Council Planning Department.

(ii) Systems of either free or cheap phone calls to centrally located advice personnel; for example, the Box 99 system used by Surrey County Council Protection Department. A consumer can ring a local number for 2p from anywhere in Surrey and calls are automatically routed by a special device to the Dorking Headquarters of the service, where there is a team of six consumer advisers.

* see map at Appendix 2 - reproduced by permission of Lothian Regional Council
advisers/

to answer calls.

(iii) Contact points in villages whose enquirers can be put in touch with the appropriate agency for dealing with their problems. A scheme of this sort, involving 140 volunteers, is currently operating in Shropshire.

We should consider whether any of these - or variations thereof - could be more widely used in Scotland.

2.6 The precise location of an advice agency (e.g. whether near a major bus stop, or up a side street) is another important "accessibility" factor. The physical appearance of an agency can either attract or deter people: Tony Burton and Robina Johnson argue in "Public Participation in Planning" (Planning Exchange (Glasgow) 1976) that too plush an advice centre can actually inhibit people from using it. Evidence from the NCC Survey is ambiguous. For example, 12% of the sample thought CAB premises were drab: 15% thought they were bright and attractive. However, these different findings might reflect either the difference in quality of CAB premises or the different expectations of the groups that use them.

2.7 The opening times of agencies are an important accessibility factor, likely to have considerable effect on their usage. To what extent are advice agencies needed out of ordinary working hours? Is urgent advice adequately catered for? If longer hours are required how can they be economically provided? The Samaritan service provides important evidence of how the telephone can become literally a life line. But are telephones always available to the people who need them or, if available, are they adequate?

2.8 A final important factor relating to accessibility is publicity for the advice network. It is important for consumers to know what agencies exist to give them advice and where they can be found. According to a 1976 survey in the NCC report on the Nationalised Industry Consumer Councils the proportion of consumers in Scotland who, when prompted, recognised the names of various advice agencies was as follows:

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<th>Agency</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
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<td>CABx</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Advice Centres</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumer Advice Centres</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gas Consumers' Council</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity Consultative Council</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Knowing the name, when prompted, is a long way from knowing where to go. We should consider methods of making the whole range of advice agencies better known to the public. Should a single logo, such as the one successfully used to advertise the Legal Advice scheme (para ) be introduced for all advice agencies? What other innovation could be used to widen public knowledge of the availability of advice?
2.9 Second, what is the balance of advantage between
generalist and specialist centres? A generalist
centre (for lack of a better word) knows something
about everything. The specialist centre knows everything
about something. Which is the type most likely to
be needed by consumers - and if both are needed how can
they be economically provided? Among generalist
centres we include CABx and neighbourhood advice agencies
(such as those provided by the Ferguslie Park Community
Development Project in Paisley and by the Craigillar
Festival Society in Edinburgh). The specialist agencies
are largely "one-issue" agencies, e.g. Consumer Advice
Centres, Housing Advice Centres. There are obvious
advantages in specialised agencies providing a considerable
degree of expertise in a particular topic. Indepth
specialist advice must be available somewhere to
consumers. There is no substitute for the knowledge of a
lawyer or an accountant. So a specialist agency where
the specialists are always on tap can have advantages.
On the other hand, specialist agencies by their very
nature, require clients to categorise for themselves
their particular problems, and go to the specialist
agency which can best help them. Such precise knowledge
is not universal. Even if the client does find his way
to the correct specialist source of advice there is a
further complication; often the presenting problem is
only part of a wider set of problems. A housing problem
may be related to a financial one and this in turn to
marital difficulties. A complaint about a faulty
cooker can turn out to have ramifications of debt,
divorce, delinquent children and rent arrears. By
"compartamentalising" problems, specialist agencies may
miss providing very necessary overall understanding of
a consumer's problems. On the other hand there is obvious
danger in "generalist" agencies that try to give advice
on highly complex problems that need expert understanding.
How do we strike a balance?

2.10 Third, that elusive factor - quality of advice. The sort
of issues which might concern us here are the advisers'
range of relevant knowledge and information resources,
their ability to use that knowledge and their attitudes
towards and empathy with their clients. It has been
impossible in a study of this scale to undertake full
assessment of the quality of advice dispensed in the
various types of advice agencies. Perhaps it will always
be impossible. The quality of advice can vary widely
even within one agency from one adviser to another, and
indeed from one client to the next. All that we can
hope to assemble is evidence of the degree to which
the factors which contribute to the quality of advice
are available in each agency. For example: what is
the degree and nature of training of advice workers?
How are the advice workers selected? Are they from
the local community or outside? How reliable and
adequate and up-to-date is the information service on
which the advice workers rely?

2.11 A fourth major question we must ask concerns the
degree of independence of the various advice agencies.
The basic distinction that must be made here is between
between/

official agencies and non-official agencies. The
former category comprises local authority services,
such as local authority enquiry centres in Strathclyde
and Lothian, some Housing Advice Centres and most
Consumer Advice Centres. Non-official agencies are
those which, although generally in receipt of either
local or central government grants, are not part of
the governmental structure. Examples in this category
are CABx and many neighbourhood advice centres.

2.12

The crucial issue in this connection is whether official
agencies are inhibited from pressing a case for clients
in a way that non-official agencies are not. On the
one hand, a local authority advice agency approached by
a client with a problem concerning another local
authority department is in a sensitive situation when
it comes to giving advice which may be critical of or
contrary to the previous advice of colleagues. This
difficulty was clearly recognised by several Directors
of Planning in reply to our enquiries about the advice
they are able to give the public. It is argued that
local authority advice agencies can get a problem
solved 'in house' without creating the 'pressure'
which a non-official agency might need to generate. But
officials are not free agents and are responsible to
tiers of higher authority - not to mention the Public
- for their decisions and behaviour. This must lead
to inhibitions. Non-official agencies in general have
a freedom to be partisan which cannot be allowed to
official agencies precisely because of the latters'
much closer connection with Government. This would
seem to give non-official agencies an advantage; but
there are arguments on the other side. The official
agencies possess very often an extra 'authority' and
professional expertise in dealing with problems, which
can be advantageous to their clients. Moreover, whatever
their theoretical freedom, non-official advice agencies
do not in practice all support their clients to the
same extent. Sometimes they too are anxious not to
appear 'partisan'. Sometimes they lack confidence.
Sometimes they lack knowledge of procedures. Sometimes,
it may be argued, the financial ties between Government
and non-official advice agencies limit the latters'
independence, since they may be influenced in their
advice by their consciousness of the power of the local
authority to determine their future. Recent substantially
reduced Council grants - or threats of reductions - to
non-official agencies have made this issue a very
real one which cannot be ignored.

2.13

It is not accidental that this chapter ends in the
most crucial question of all - how is finance for
future development of the advice network to be considered?
If we want non-official as well as official sources of
advice, certain financial and organisational decisions
must necessarily follow. We discuss the organisation
and financing of the advice service in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 3

THE PRESENT ADVICE NETWORK IN SCOTLAND

A - CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX

3.1 Questionnaires were distributed to and completed by the three Regional Advisers of the CAB in Scotland. Discussions were held with officials of the Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (SACAB) and a number of bureaux were visited.

3.2 The aims of the CAB service have been defined as being to:

"alleviate personal distress and confusion by providing free, confidential, impartial and independent advice or information on any subject to anyone who asks. In doing this it will if necessary approach organisations on behalf of an enquirer and mediate between them;"

"exert a responsible influence on the content of social policy by pointing out the anomalies in current legislation;"

"remedy problems causing local or national anxiety by alerting and channelling Government and Public concerns".

3.3 The heart of the CAB service is, of course, the individual bureaux and we first describe how these are organised, and their relations with the Scottish and National CAB organisations.

3.4 On the staff side, each bureau consists of a group of advisers, headed by an organiser who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the bureau. In addition some bureaux have clerical and/or secretarial support though most of them again rely on volunteers. Most CAB staff are volunteers and the numbers may vary from seven to 65. Each adviser attends the bureau for at least one - but often several - half-day sessions a week.

Who are these volunteers? Typically they are people who for one reason and another are available during the day-time working hours when the bureaux are normally open. They tend therefore to be women who do not have jobs and retired men. In the past they also tended to be middle-class. Retired people with surplus energy or mothers who feel that their minds are atrophying at home have always had a natural inclination to work in CAB where the process of advice involves continuous learning and mental exercise. The climate is changing, however, and there is widespread interest in bureau work amongst people who once would have thought CAB a rather toffee-nosed organisation. The changing composition of the staff is generally welcomed because the quality of advice given depends as much on the staff input as on the information files. The sum total of knowledge in any bureau represents its capital wealth and the wider the life-experience of the staff, the 'wealthier' the bureau.
3.4/contd.

There are approximately 850 advisers working in Scottish CABs, of whom only some thirty are paid workers. A comparable commitment and expertise is expected from the volunteer as from the paid worker. Hour for hour and knowledge for knowledge they should be level pegging. But the more frequent presence and the continuity of knowledge of a paid worker, usually the bureau Organiser, can make a considerable difference to the output of a bureau and provide the solid base and firm framework without which the average volunteer can more effectively operate.

The position of the bureau Organiser is therefore pivotal. The Organiser is responsible for day-to-day administration including supervision of staff and efficient maintenance of the information resources and filing system. He or she is continuously on call for a second opinion or final decision on problems brought to the bureau; is closely involved in the preparation of the bureau's budget; maintains contact with those local organisations with which the bureau works closely; is responsible for the in-service training of staff.

A local management committee is responsible for each bureau. This is composed of representatives of the local community, drawn from both statutory and voluntary organisations, local authority Social Work and Consumer Protection Departments, WRVS, Old People's Welfare Committees, and so on. It is responsible for the selection of staff and acts as their employing body. The management committee also has responsibility for negotiating the bureau's annual grant and for ensuring that the bureau maintains adequate standards.

This latter point is extremely important. If a bureau fails to reach or maintain recognised standards on matters such as adequacy of premises, numbers of trained staff and opening hours, it may not be registered with the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB).

The ultimate sanction of failure to achieve registration is the loss of NACAB support services (see below). But as long as bureaux are exerting themselves to achieve the right standards they are not at immediate risk.

In September 1976, 30 of the (then) 44 Scottish bureaux were registered with NACAB, and the remainder were being encouraged to prepare and apply for registration.

3.5 Each bureau in Scotland is a member of the Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (SACAB) which was established in its present form in 1975. Technically speaking, SACAB remains an Area Committee of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB) alongside 15 in England, two in Wales and one in Northern Ireland. However, the special problems facing SACAB, largely stemming from the legal and administrative differences between Scotland and England as well as the sheer size of the Scottish 'area', have to some extent been recognised by NACAB, and SACAB has greater staff resources than other Area Committees. SACAB senior staff, based in Edinburgh, consist of a Chief Executive, an Information Officer, a Training Adviser and three Area Advisory Officers covering North, West and East-Central-South Scotland respectively. The latter are responsible
for ensuring that bureaux maintain adequate standards for registration; assisting and advising bureaux on both policy and operation; promoting new bureaux; advising and assisting in negotiations with local authorities; and maintaining contacts with organisations and people outside the service who are concerned with its development.

3.6 The SACAB Council consists of elected representatives of local management committees, of bureau organisers and of bureau workers, as well as co-opted members and representatives of outside bodies such as the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Council of Social Service. The elected representatives are chosen at the SACAB Annual General Meeting in which all registered bureaux take part. There are also specialist committees dealing with the future development of the service in Scotland: e.g. finance, training, legal services and constitution.

3.7 At the apex of the CAB service is the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB) with which rests responsibility for implementation of policy. The bureaux meeting collectively at their Annual General Meeting constitute the ultimate policy-making body of the service. The national Council consisting of representatives from the Areas meets three times a year. The Council has a number of Committees, notably the Registration Committee which considers registration applications from bureaux all over the country, including Scotland. Therefore while SACAB clearly has great influence over the direction of the service in Scotland, as well as providing vital support services for Scottish bureaux, basic policy questions with important effects for Scotland are decided at NACAB level.

3.8 Finance for the CABs in Scotland comes largely from grants to bureaux from all the Regional and six District Councils: (Edinburgh, East Kilbride, Stewartry, Dunfermline, Stirling and Dundee). Strathclyde Region gives a single block grant in response to a single block application from 19 bureaux throughout the Region; this is then divided amongst the individual bureaux by their own Regional Committee. The other Regional authorities all make grants direct to-at least one bureau in their area; however, it is clear that, as the SACAB Annual Report 1975/76 suggests, there is a considerable difference between Regions in the degree of financial commitment to CAB. If this differential continues then it is clear that, as between the Regions, either the proportionate number of bureaux to population or the efficiency of service - dependent on such factors as a full time Organiser, decent premises - or both, will increasingly diverge.

3.9 Financial aid in kind is also forthcoming from both Regional and District Councils: in particular, many bureaux receive rate relief and a number are lent premises or services or help with telephone costs either by the District or Regional Council.
3.10 A further source of finance for bureaux is the CAB Development Fund set up by Central Government with a budget of £1 ½ million to run from 1974-79. Development Fund money is channelled through NACAB: so far Scotland has received 6% of the money disbursed - a proportion SACAB hopes to see increased. As well as being used to develop SACAB services to bureaux, money was allocated in 1974-76 from the Development Fund to most Scottish bureaux either to support their establishment or to develop their services. (This included £12,000 for shortfall in Strathclyde bureaux).

Such money is only short-term and in the longer term these developments will need to be supported by local authorities if they are to survive.

3.11 There are forty-five bureaux currently operating in Scotland. (See Table 1 - page 19) They range in age from those which have operated since the inception of the CAB service in 1939 to Alness bureau which opened in January 1977. The growth in the service over the last ten years has been remarkable. Only nine bureaux (out of 45) have been operating continuously for more than a decade. However, the present Scottish total of 45 bureaux compares unfavourably with a total of 625 for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. On a crude population basis the equivalent Scottish total should be 60. When account is taken of the scattered population in many parts of Scotland as well as the high incidence of deprivation, in such areas as Clydeside, the differential becomes even starker.

3.12 However, the maps on Pages 21-22 more closely illustrate the number of obvious gaps in CAB coverage in Scotland - showing incidentally the contrast with the more widespread coverage of England. Highland Region, covering an area the size of Wales, has only two bureaux. This is an extreme example of the generally poor coverage of rural areas. Borders Region with three bureaux (one having three separate locations) within its boundaries seems to be the best served rural area. There are also, however, large towns without any CABs, e.g. Ayr (population 48,000), Kilmarnock (population 48,000) and Paisley (population 93,000). Similarly while certain large areas of deprivation in Glasgow, such as Easterhouse, Dalmarnock and Drumchapel have bureaux, others such as Govan, Blackhill and Castlemilk do not. Strathclyde with 19 bureaux appears superficially to be well provided, but in relation to population and to high deprivation it is one of the least satisfactory areas.

3.13 SACAB's Development Plan (as at February 1977) argues for at least twelve new 'lynch-pin' bureaux to be quickly established, either by new promotions at Peterhead, Springburn, Govan, Castlemilk, Paisley, Greenock, Kilmarnock, Ayr and Stranraer and by major upgradings of existing bureaux at Stirling and Dalmarnock. The new bureau at Alness is included in this lynch-pin scheme. The aim is that there will be few Districts with populations of over 40,000 that do not have at
least one registered bureau; the footnote to Table 1 shows present deficiencies in this respect. The premise on which this development is based is that most District Council areas contain one town which most people in the area visit fairly frequently for shopping and other services, and can therefore use at the same time for a CAB visit. Some districts, of course, have more than one such centre. (The map of Lothian Regional Council's "shopping hierarchy" reproduced Appendix 2 illustrates how shopping centres could be used if this approach were accepted as a rule of thumb).

But the limitations of such a scheme with regard to rural areas - e.g. East Lothian - are also apparent from the map.

3.14 Apart from geographical distribution opening times affect accessibility. These vary considerably between bureaux. Only eight bureaux are open morning and afternoon, Monday to Friday (this total includes three of the four city centre bureaux). A further 26 of the 44 surveyed were open for at least one session (morning or afternoon) daily between Monday and Friday, many of them for two sessions on most of these days. A few bureaux are open so infrequently that this factor must have severe effects on their accessibility. At the extreme, two of the three locations of the Berwickshire bureaux (at Coldstream and Duns) are open only two hours a week. Even in strategic urban areas, some bureaux operate restricted opening times - e.g. Perth (14 hours) Stirling (10 hours) Inverness (12 hours). Twenty-one bureaux are open on Saturday mornings, and 18 bureaux have at least one evening opening per week. A number of CAB personnel, in common with other advice workers, are not convinced that evening and Saturday morning openings are justified by the comparatively few enquiries made at these times. On the other hand they feel that evenings and Saturdays are often most suitable for appointments with lawyers or financial counsellors when husband and wife often wish to come together.

3.15 The physical appearance of Scottish bureaux ranges from the smart, easily identifiable bureau in a good 'High Street' setting, such as those at Aberdeen and Clydebank, to austere and obscure premises one or two floors above ground level. According to the questionnaire returns, the majority of bureaux appear to be fairly well situated within their towns: 33 out of the 44 surveyed are reported as being on or near either a main street, main shopping centre, or civic centre. The CAB has recognised the need to improve its appearance and advertise its presence by vivid house colours (blue and yellow) and a bolder form of display poster. Rutherglen bureau completely lacks facilities for private interviews; Longstone (Edinburgh) bureau also operates from one room but has access to rooms for private interviews. Without privacy it is not easy to see how a bureau can honour the confidentiality on which the CABs lay great stress.

3.16 The CAB service in Scotland handled 180,838 enquiries
enquiries/

in the year 1 October 1975 - 30 September 1976. The breakdown of enquiries, by CAB's own categories is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Enquiries 1975-6</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer, Trade and Business</td>
<td>40,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing, Property and Land</td>
<td>29,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Personal</td>
<td>27,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration of Justice</td>
<td>14,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National and International</td>
<td>13,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>12,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>11,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>6,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>6,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel, Transport &amp; Holidays</td>
<td>5,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Activities</td>
<td>4,346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3,474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>3,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration and Nationality</td>
<td>708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>180,836</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This represents a fivefold increase in enquiries since 1970 when there were 35,161. In the same period the number of bureaux increased from 20 to 44.

3.17 Nearly 50% of all enquiries in 1975-1976 were handled by the four "city centre" bureaux. Aberdeen (7,902 enquiries), Dundee (7,410), Edinburgh including its two extensions (30,041) and Glasgow (42,519). Other highly used bureaux included Drumschapel (7,711), Easterhouse (9,337), Clydebank (6,209), Hamilton (6,096), East Kilbride (5,472). Demographic factors alone cannot explain differences in usage between bureaux; for example the combined usage of the bureaux in Airdrie and Coatbridge (combined population 90,000) is not much more than half that of Clydebank (population 47,000) despite the fact that the latter is nearer to Glasgow, with its city centre CAB, than are Airdrie and Coatbridge.

What we have termed "accessibility" factors would certainly appear to be of importance here: Airdrie Bureau, for example, (which had a total of 866 enquiries in 1975/76) operates very restricted opening times.

There is also a strong likelihood that the presence of a full-time paid Organiser, as in Clydebank, can accelerate the activity of a bureau. The work of Organiser is increasingly too complex and demanding for any except those who are exceptionally dedicated and/or free of all other commitments.

3.18 Who uses the CABx? No hard evidence is available by social class although it is obvious that the neighbourhood largely determines the clientele except in city centres. The SACAB Report for 1975/76 makes the claim "that a wider cross-section of the community is using the service than ever before".
3.19 A crucial factor in the level of usage of any advice agency, and variations in usage between agencies of the same type, is the reputation for accurate and efficient advice that an agency builds up in its community. This leads to issues relating to the quality of advice CABs engage in a wide range of advice activities including "informing", "advising" and "action" (using Rosalind Brooke's terminology, para 1.3). CAB workers engage in a great deal of mediation with public and private bureaucracies on behalf of clients. There is also a growing trend towards representation of clients at appeal tribunals. A Spring School for CAB workers on advocacy and representation is being held in April 1977. However, the growth in this aspect of CAB work does not appear to measure up to the known need for representation services.

3.20 Training

All CAB staff have to undergo training before final acceptance as bureau workers and they must be prepared to undergo regular training after they are appointed. This includes two 2-day residential schools every year as well as intermittent lectures, discussions, seminars and training visits. The recently appointed SACAB Training Adviser has been examining training methods in Scotland and the emphasis is moving from series of talks by outside professionals, such as lawyers and Consumer Protection Department officers, towards tutor-based training. The aim is to base training more closely on situations likely to confront bureau workers. Two-thirds of bureau organisers have now been trained to act as tutors, and a further twenty tutors are also available. In a large bureau, training will consist of tutor-led classes in addition to study of written material. In smaller bureaux, where the number of trainees could not justify classes, the emphasis will be more on "self-study materials" drawn up by tutors from a library of material which SACAB plan to make available. The lack of a regional training centre where workers from different bureaux, and even non-CAB workers, could come together for intensive training has been a felt want in Scotland. Several areas in England have such centres and have found they contribute to higher standards throughout the service.

3.21 As well as training in both initial and "refresher" courses, continuing information back-up for advice staff is crucial to the quality of advice given. NACAB provides a basic monthly information service, covering new legislation, Government regulations, official and non-official organisations and administrative procedures, to all registered UK bureaux. In Scotland, this service is supplemented by similar monthly material from SACAB's Information Officer which covers separate Scottish legislation, administrative procedures and institutions. An essential feature of this service is to ensure that information is continually up-dated. As many as 200 changes have to be made by bureaux to stored information every month. This information service is now available
on sale to other agencies at the cost of £200 p.a. However this can only be done with the approval of the bureau nearest to the organisation concerned.

3.22 Although the aim of the CAB service in providing a "generalist" service is to deal forthwith with most of the problems presented at bureaux, a considerable number of clients are referred to other agencies or professionals. This happens either because the case requires expert professional judgements or because it is sensible and convenient to refer clients to a nearby specialist agency with expertise in a particular subject (e.g. Aberdeen CAB refers most consumer cases to Grampian Region's Consumer Advice Centre which shares the premises). Social Work Departments, Marriage Guidance Counsellors, Lawyers, Housing Advice Centres, etc. are obvious points to which referrals must be made as necessary. The danger with referrals, however, is that there can be a high drop-out rate. A CAB survey has suggested that this may be as high as 50%. Enquirers lack the pertinacity or confidence or courage to carry their problem from one office to another without support. It is interesting, therefore, that to handle certain recurrent problems requiring professional expertise there is a trend towards specialist "clinics" held by professional experts within bureaux, as part of the CAB service. These clinics are generally held outwith normal bureau opening times, either in an evening or on a Saturday morning. Six CABx in Scotland are now operating regular legal clinics in which volunteer lawyers give legal advice to CAB clients. Only where "waivers" are granted by the Law Society and local professional organisations, can the advising lawyer take the case beyond the advice level; so far "waivers" have only been granted in Dundee, Penicuik, Perth and Aberdeen. Financial advice clinics usually staffed by volunteer accountants and other financial experts operate in three bureaux. Glasgow Bath Street runs a Planning Aid Clinic; Edinburgh runs an Education Advice Clinic. Consumer enquiry sessions are held in Fife bureaux by Consumer Protection Officers. Finally, Edinburgh CAB operates a Consumer Advice Centre supplementing the normal consumer advice work of every bureau, within its general bureau.

3.23 SACAB regards the feedback to public authorities of information about general issues arising from enquiries received as of crucial importance. Details of consumer complaints are sent monthly by way of local Consumer Protection Departments to the Office of Fair Trading. Evidence collected from bureaux by SACAB can be presented to Central or Local Government, Royal Commissions and similar bodies.

In the past evidence has been given on matters such as fuel debts and disconnections. In March 1977 SACAB is gathering evidence from the Scottish bureaux about difficulties experienced by clients in regard to legal services in Scotland for submission to the Royal Commission.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Council Area (pop. figures bracketed)</th>
<th>District Council area</th>
<th>Bureau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Borders (98,477)</td>
<td>Berwickshire</td>
<td>Berwickshire (at Eyemouth, Coldstream, Duns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ettrick &amp; Lauderdale</td>
<td>Central Borders (at Galashiels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(32,421)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roxburgh</td>
<td>Hawick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(35,400)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central (263,028)</td>
<td>Clackmannan</td>
<td>Clackmannanshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(46,100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stirling</td>
<td>Stirling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(76,443)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Falkirk</td>
<td>Falkirk, Grangemouth, Denny and Dunipace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(140,485)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries and Galloway (143,187)</td>
<td>Nithsdale</td>
<td>Dumfries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(56,474)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stewartry</td>
<td>Castle Douglas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(22,192)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife (327,131)</td>
<td>Kirkcaldy</td>
<td>Kirkcaldy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(145,027)</td>
<td>Buskhaven and Glenrothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dunfermline</td>
<td>Dunfermline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(120,459)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grampian (438,630)</td>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(211,848)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland (175,473)</td>
<td>Inverness</td>
<td>Inverness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(49,760)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ross and Cromarty</td>
<td>Alness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(34,858)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lothian (745,623)</td>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>Edinburgh (including extensions at Longstone and Leith)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(476,333)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Lothian</td>
<td>Bathgate, Livingston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(111,849)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midlothian</td>
<td>Dalkeith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(79,746)</td>
<td>Penicuik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Lothian</td>
<td>Musselburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(77,395)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathclyde (2,575,514)</td>
<td>Dumbarton</td>
<td>Dumbarton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(78,723)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>Glasgow Bath Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(982,515)</td>
<td>Rutherglen, Dalmarnock, Easterhouse, Drumchapel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Council Area</td>
<td>District Council Area</td>
<td>Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(pop.figures bracketed)</td>
<td>Clydebanks (58,835)</td>
<td>Clydebanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbernauld &amp; Kilsyth (45,617)</td>
<td>Cumbernauld</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monklands (109,620)</td>
<td>Airdrie</td>
<td>Coatbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motherwell (161,570)</td>
<td>Motherwell</td>
<td>Bellshill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton (104,359)</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Kilbride (74,181)</td>
<td>East Kilbride</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renfrew (202,901)</td>
<td>Barrhead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunninghame (125,865)</td>
<td>Irvine</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Saltcoats, Garnock Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tayside (397,065)</td>
<td>Dundee (197,371)</td>
<td>Dundee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perth and Kinross (116,056)</td>
<td>Perth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Isles Island Council</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lewis and Harris (at Stornoway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(29,891)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Orkneys and Shetland and the following District Council areas have no bureaux –

Tweeddale (13,676)
Wigtown (29,938)
Annandale and Eskdale (34,583)
North East Fife (61,645)
Moray (75,659)
Banff and Buchan (44,979)
Gordon (44,979)
Kincardine and Deeside (33,315)
Waithness (29,610)
Sutherland (11,968)
Skye and Lochalsh (9,725)

Lochaber (19,192)
Badenoch & Strathspey (9,309)
Nairn (11,051)
Argyll and Bute (65,142)
Beardsden and Milngavie (35,926)
Strathkelvin (77,436)
Eastwood (49,857)
Lanark (153,524)
Inverclyde (109,365)
Kilmarnock and Loudon (61,005)
Cumnock and Doon Valley (48,815)
Angus (84,178)
CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX
Scotland 1976
Source: NACAB
CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX

England & Wales 1976

KEY

- CAB
+ Mobile CAB
※ Greater London:
106 CABx (1 Mobile)

Source: NACAB
3.24 In this section we deal with the agencies set up by local authorities to inform and advise their citizens on the full range of their own functions. These "generalist" agencies are distinct from the specialist Consumer and Housing Advice agencies which have been established by some local authorities. Our evidence on this subject was gathered by means of postal questionnaires to the 65 regional, district and island Councils, to which an 60% response was received. In addition, Strathclyde and Lothian Regional personnel were interviewed.

3.25 We were particularly concerned to discover the extent to which local authorities had set up purpose-built agencies, staffed by full-time information or advice officers, housed in their own offices or rooms. From replies received, however, it appears that very few Councils actually operate Advice Centres as such. What is more common is that personnel in offices ordinarily open to the public give information and/or advice on a wide range of matters connected with local government. Many local authorities regard this informal arrangement as adequate. Some prefer, without opening special offices, to train staff for advice purposes. The Chief Executive of Moray District Council for instance expressed the view that "...the District Headquarters and the various sub-offices are all advice centres", adding that the staff in the Moray District sub-offices were trained so that they could offer basic information and advice on all matters dealt with by the District and, where requested, about functions covered by Grampian Region. This has been a significant change from the previous situation when Town Council offices could only give information about their own services. Moray District has, in effect, expressed its willingness to act as agents for Grampian Region. Stirling District Council offers another example of such co-operation.

3.26 In the Regions also information is available at Area Offices used for other purposes, such as Registration services, career services, schools administration and "collection and disbursement of monies". Strathclyde Region are currently planning to develop a system of circulation information to Area Offices and other public contact points. This public information service is being developed through the Region's Public Relations Department. It is planned that the public contact points where information will be supplied to the public will consist of the thirty Area Offices located throughout Strathclyde Region and the sub-Regional offices of the various Regional departments. It is also planned that registrars not operating from area offices will be contact points - this facility should be particularly important for those living in the more remote areas of the Region. It is also planned to issue information leaflets and booklets to libraries by agreement with the District authorities. The headquarters (Melrose House, Glasgow) as well as providing "back-up" for the service will itself be a public contact point. The extent to which advice is still seen as a side-line responsibility of the authority is illustrated by the fact that only the HQ staff will be engaged full-time in
information provision.

Members of the Regional Council staff dealing with the public in these offices have undergone a short training course, organised and led by senior members of the Public Relations Departments. Information kits will be supplied to staff providing information to the public and leaflets sent to offices for public display and use. The stress of the scheme is on information not advice. The information given is expected to be largely on Regional services, although people with queries about District services will be directed to the appropriate offices. In the case of a complicated enquiry or a complaint about a Regional service, special forms have been drawn up which can be used to document a case for forwarding to the appropriate department.

3.27 A very highly developed system of local authority information agencies is provided by Lothian Region. The Department of Administration has established a network consisting of special premises in fifteen offices located in Edinburgh, Musselburgh, Dalkeith, Currie, South Queensferry, Blackburn, Linlithgow, Kirkliston, Bonnyrigg, Loanhead, Penicuik, Armadale, Bathgate, Whitburn. The scheme is run in co-operation with the District Councils and while the Region pay the salary bills, the premises used in most cases belong to District Councils. In East Lothian, the District Council runs a complementary network (save for Musselburgh, which is "regional") with enquiry centres at Haddington, Tranent, Dunbar, Prestonpans and North Berwick. Opening times vary slightly, but all centres basically operate a 5 day week, open 8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. In addition to the centres, there are "freeones" to the central information point in Edinburgh at District Offices in Gorebridge, Newtowngrange and Broxburn. "Logos" featuring a question mark and a telephone dial, are displayed outside all the enquiry centres and at the freeone points. Overall, the network would appear to be reasonably accessible for most people in Lothian Region and to provide an information system unequalled elsewhere in Scotland or in most of England. Matching this with the Lothian Shopping centre map (App. 2) shows an unusually comprehensive information service available to the public.

3.28 Once again, however, it must be emphasised that this is mainly an information, not an advice, service. As the name "enquiry centre" suggests, the agencies in this network are to a large extent concerned with providing information upon request. Staff resources limit the extent of indepth assistance which can be given. Apart from the Edinburgh headquarters of the service, where there are two workers, only one worker is available at each enquiry centre. (In case of absence a member of the District office staff takes over the enquiry desk). The staff can generally deal with non-complicated problems on the spot. More complicated problems will obviously take longer or require referral. But the enquiry centres remain contact points between the enquirer and the bureaucracy. The enquiry centres also
undertake such functions as the distribution of Concession Tickets to those who have missed the general distribution. This may be a useful way to introduce the facilities of the enquiry centre to members of the public who would otherwise not hear of it.

3.29 In the year May 1975-May 1976 (the first year of full operation) a total of 103,232 enquiries were handled in the 15 Regional enquiry centres. 56,173 of them related to regional services and of these 31,082 concerned the work of the Finance and Assessor's Departments. The second largest category of enquiries related to public transport (5,876; a total which may be related to the centre's role in distributing concession tickets); 43,365 enquiries related to District Council services of which 25,571 concerned housing and repairs; 3,694 enquiries were on miscellaneous matters, largely relating to difficulties with gas and electricity or Social Security. A third of all enquiries were handled at the Edinburgh centres: the number of enquiries at other centres ranged from 1,847 in Currie to 12,674 at Bonnyrigg. Finally, the "Freefone" facility, which is a recent innovation has had a disappointing level of usage; it is not clear whether this is due to lack of advertising or to the fact that on the whole people prefer to make enquiries in person.

3.30 The workers in the centre are given an "initial intensive training course of two weeks' duration". This takes the form of talks by local authority Chief Officers and speakers from outside bodies. Initial training is supplemented by regular monthly meetings between enquiry centre staff and senior Regional staff, to which guest speakers are also invited. The centre staff are provided with an information service from Regional headquarters and there is a weekly delivery of leaflets etc. to the centres. As the network is still in its early days the Region are actively considering ways of improving the amount and quality of information given at the centres, as well as developing the depth of the service offered.

3.31 Inverclyde District Council run a network of three information and advice centres at Greenock, Gourock and Port Glasgow. The centres deal with a wide range of queries regarding local and central government. All are situated in specifically designated offices within District Council premises and are open all day Monday to Friday. The Greenock centre is also open on Saturday mornings. The main office of the network is at Greenock, centrally situated and adjacent to a shopping precinct. The centre is next to the Housing Department (and does not therefore deal with housing enquiries.) It shares premises with the Strathclyde Region Consumer Advice Centre which handles specifically consumer problems (see Chapter 4, para.4). Regional and District Councillors hold surgeries in the centre on Saturday mornings and the District Councillors' secretary is based there. A total of eight staff is employed in this network.
five (including two part-time) at Greenock, two at Gourock, one at Port Glasgow. The staff received no formal training for their work, except for attendance at a Scottish Tourist Board training course. (The staff at Greenock and Gourock are involved in the S.T.B's "Book-a-Bed-Ahead" scheme).

3.32 The City of Aberdeen District Council's Public Relations Department operate an Information Centre situated in a main street near the main shopping area of the city. There is also a CAB desk at the Centre manned every afternoon - soon to be manned in the morning as well. The centre is open Monday to Friday morning and afternoon. It handles 1800 enquiries a week on matters relating to local and central government as well as to gas, electricity and other nationalised fuel problems. The most common sort of enquiry is a request for basic information; for example, what office to approach for a rates rebate, where to get a concession ticket. But staff will contact other agencies if they are needed to solve an enquirer's problem. The centre manager reckons that only 7% of enquiries coming into the office each week are too specialised or complex for the staff to handle. The Council's publicity leaflet on the centre stresses that the centre "does not pass the buck. It undertakes to answer, explain and advise. Where queries are of a specialised nature it will put you in direct contact with the appropriate expert".

3.33 That the bulk of enquiries is for straightforward information is further shown by the fact that there is only a staff of three at the centre, which gives each staff member an average of only four minutes to handle each query. The centre staff receive a short initial training, but the basic training is regarded as being "on the job".

3.34 The Administration Department of Kilmarnock and Loudon District Council run an Information Office in the centre of Kilmarnock. "General assistance" is given on all local government functions. If detailed information is requested people are directed to the appropriate department. The centre is open 9-5 Mondays to Fridays and has a staff of four who receive no specialised training for their work.
C - NEIGHBOURHOOD ADVICE AND INFORMATION CENTRES

3.35 "Neighbourhood advice and information centres" describes a large and diverse body of advice and information agencies. What such agencies have in common is a local community base and an orientation towards providing information as part of a broader initiative in community organisation, not as an end in itself. The communities served by such agencies are usually urban ones suffering from multiple deprivation. If deprivation means a relative lack of access to resources, information must be seen as a resource which, like housing and education, is unequally distributed in society. The concept of a neighbourhood-based information centre playing an advocacy role for local residents when their interests came into conflict with official policies developed in the United States with the anti-poverty programmes and was actively taken up in Britain after 1968 by Community Development Projects (CDPs) and other projects sponsored by the Urban Aid Programme.

3.36 We surveyed a selection of neighbourhood centres by questionnaire for our Report (see Table 2 p. 31) and we have been in touch with centres which have opened in the very recent past which were not included in our survey. The centres chosen were: in Glasgow: Laurieston Information Centre, The View, Lochend Neighbourhood Project, Community Information Centre - Govan, Milton Advice Centre; in Paisley: Ferguslie Park; in Edinburgh: Craigmillar; in Hamilton District: Blantyre A.I.D. Others referred to are; in Dundee: Beechwood Information Centre; in Motherwell: Craigneuk Information Centre. Because of their dependence on government and local authority finance (which we discuss more fully later on) neighbourhood centres are extremely vulnerable to the withdrawal of such support through the completion of fixed term government programmes or cut-backs in local authority expenditure: thus the current state of the centres is subject to rapid changes.

3.37 Location and Access

Neighbourhood centres are based in a variety of locations including shop frontpremises (Beechwood, Govan) community centres (Blantyre) converted flats (Lochend) and the ground floor of a tower block (Laurieston). Often centres are housed by their sponsoring organisations (Craigmillar by the Craigmillar Festival Society, Ferguslie Park by the Community Development Project based in the area). Premises are often shared with a wide variety of organisations and activities; Milton, for instance, cohabits with a community newspaper, a tenants association, a Community Council steering committee, a playgroup, a children's dancing class and an MP's and councillors' surgery. Catchment areas are small: none of the centres surveyed reported a catchment area population of more than 25,000 and many were considerably smaller. Beechwood, for instance, serves an area of only 460 houses. All the centres (except Blantyre) are open during normal office hours on weekdays. Three (Ferguslie Park, Milton and Blantyre) hold regular evening sessions and Milton also opens every second Saturday morning for three hours. However, the centres' workers are in many cases also available to the public through their involvement in the evening activities of other local organisations.
3.38 All but one of the centres are staffed by full-time paid workers. Five centres have volunteer advisers as well, but in only one of these – Ferguslie Park – are the volunteers local people as opposed to outside professionals. Of the paid staff, most had several years experience in information and advice giving and many had professional or degree qualifications in subjects such as planning, social work or community work. Blantyre A.I.D. is the only all-volunteer centre; one fact which is reflected in its restricted hours of opening (one afternoon and one evening session weekly, each of two hours). Of the centres which have professional volunteers, five have lawyers available, three have MPs or councillors; others have Public Health Officers, Tenants Liaison Officers, Planners and Consumer Protection Officers. Two centres which do not have professional volunteers – Blantyre and Lochend – operate a referral service for professional advice.

3.39 The Work of Neighbourhood Centres

Neighbourhood centres give advice on a whole range of problems and issues but a few subjects dominate their work, in particular housing and welfare benefits. A Community Worker in Beechwood noted that "housing repair complaints and social security - related problems are predominant". A Report on the work of the Ferguslie Park centre found that 59% of the users had housing problems, of which 40% concerned housing repairs; 29% of the centre's users had welfare benefits problems. Other subjects which featured prominently in the centre's replies were legal problems, fuel debts, financial problems, public health and education issues. In view of this it is not surprising that the principal activity described by most centres was that of mediating between clients and central government or local authority departments.

3.40 Finance

Table 2 reveals the dependence of neighbourhood centres on external sources of finance. All but one of the centres in our table is dependent on central or local government grants (and in some cases, on both). Of those centres which receive central government aid, one – Ferguslie Park – is financed by a Community Development Project due to finish in September, 1977: the centre hopes to continue in operation under local management if an Urban Aid grant can be obtained for this purpose. Two centres – Craigneuk and Govan – are staffed by workers whose wages are paid by the Job Creation Programme, at present due to finish in April, 1978. Two centres – Laurieston and the View – are sponsored by Crossroads Youth and Community Association which receives a grant from the Social Work Services Group for training social work students. Two centres – Lochend and Beechwood – are funded through the Urban Aid programme. Grants under this programme – as with C.D.Ps – are conditional on the local authority paying 25% of the costs. The condition that a project must receive local financial support is also a feature of grants from the EEC Social Fund, such as the substantial one to the Craigmillar Festival Society.

Jill Snaith "The Ferguslie Park Information and Action Centre" p.12 (Dept. of Social and Economic Research, Univ. of Glasgow)
When this is taken into account it is clear that the attitudes of local authorities are crucial to the survival of almost all the centres. Pressure to cut local authority spending puts them in a very vulnerable position at present. Strathclyde is currently carrying out a review of grants paid to all types of voluntary organisations by the Region and many organisations fear that any revision of the grants paid will be in a downward direction. The Craigmillar Information Centre might have had to close if a cut proposed in grant from Lothian Region's Social Work budget to the Craigmillar Festival Society had been implemented. The Beechwood Information Centre in Dundee would now have closed had a recommendation of the Social Work Committee in Tayside that the Region should withdraw from the Urban Aid funding arrangement for the centre been accepted. Also those centres which have been set up in the recent past with wage bills paid by the Job Creation Programme will probably have to look to the local authorities for support, at least in part, if they are to continue in existence once the Programme finishes next year.

3.41 Future Development

The priority for future development most often mentioned by neighbourhood centres is that legal advice should be more freely available in these areas. A number of centres expressed a wish to see information and advice giving being taken over by volunteers from the local community and for the work of the centres to be more closely integrated with other community action initiatives.

3.42 Some centres already have a large volunteer element and it is possible that a change in the Urban Aid programme, which has been criticised (particularly in Strathclyde) for channelling resources to relatively well-off areas, will favour projects such as advice centres in designated areas of deprivation which are capable of being taken over by local volunteers after an initial period.

3.43 The relationship between information centres and community development is more problematic. The C.D.P. report on the Ferguslie Park Information Centre illustrates the difficulties: "Almost all Centre users definitely expected the staff to deal with their problems and arrive at solutions without requiring positive action on their own part. Only about one tenth saw the Centre as a place from which to get information and advice; the rest depended on the ability of the staff to take action on their behalf. Nothing emerged from the survey to indicate that the residents who used the Centre were being encouraged to deal with future problems themselves. The remarks made by users implied the contrary: that the Centre staff were particularly able to deal with certain problems in a more successful way than residents, simply by being more articulate and competent. No respondents mentioned group issues and even those involved in actions likely to have communal repercussions seemed unaware that their problems had wider significance".*

and it concludes "Though the staff of the Ferguslie Park Office had wider

* Jill Snaith, Op Cit P.28
wider/

aims the survey suggested that these did not seem to be having a great effect on clients experience of the Centre. Nor for that matter were clients themselves concerned with more than getting effective help with their own problems. The Centre will have to reassess its aims and determine which are realistic for the longer term". *

*Jill Snaith Op Cit P.28
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Financial Support from</th>
<th>Other support from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laurieston Information Centre, Glasgow</td>
<td>Strathclyde Region, Scottish Office, Voluntary Services</td>
<td>Rates Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Information Centre, Govan, Glasgow</td>
<td>Job Creation Programme, Strathclyde Region*</td>
<td>Rates Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferguslie Park Information Centre, Paisley</td>
<td>Community Development Project**</td>
<td>CDP facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The View, Glasgow</td>
<td>Strathclyde Region Social Work Services Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craigmillar Festival Society, Edinburgh</td>
<td>Lothian Region, Scottish Office, EEC Social Fund</td>
<td>Rates Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blantyre AID Hamilton District</td>
<td>Voluntary Sources</td>
<td>Community Centre facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lochend Neighbourhood Project, Glasgow</td>
<td>Urban Aid</td>
<td>Rates Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton Advice Centre, Glasgow</td>
<td>Strathclyde Region Church Sources</td>
<td>Church facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beechwood Information Centre, Dundee</td>
<td>Urban Aid</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craigneuk Information Centre</td>
<td>Job Creation Programme</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Strathclyde Region are reviewing the Community Information Centre's grant for 1977.

** CDP finishes in September, 1977. The Centre is applying for funding to Urban Aid in order to continue after this date under tenant control.
3.44 The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (Section 149 (6) ) gave Regional and Islands Councils in Scotland the right to provide consumer advice in addition to their statutory provision of consumer protection services. The duty to enforce the Trade Descriptions Act in 1968 had already meant the introduction of a new role for local authority enforcement officers, at that time called Inspectors of Weights and Measures but now generally known throughout Scotland as Consumer Protection Officers (Central Region - Trading Standards Officers). These officers had found in dealing with complaints from the public under this Act that often a complaint which was not a breach of the criminal law had a remedy available to consumers through civil action in the courts. Advice given in this way gradually evolved in some local authorities to the giving of general post-shopping advice and eventually to handling all types of consumer complaints, both criminal and civil. However, the authority provided under the 1973 Act persuaded all Regional Councils to look again at their Consumer Protection Departments and to decide whether and how to develop this service to the public. Funds becoming available from the Department of Prices and Consumer Protection in 1975 gave additional force to these considerations. There was no uniformity however in the decisions made by the different Councils.

3.45 Some authorities chose to support the CAB as the agency for dealing with civil complaints and provided a back-up service to the CAB in this role. In Borders Region, for instance, a local authority Consumer Advisory Officer has been appointed to liaise with and assist CABx in the Region. In Fife Region, Consumer Protection Department provides the peripatetic services of a Senior Inspector to service "surgeries" in CABx. The level of advice on civil matters given by the remaining local authority Consumer Protection Departments varies widely from the provision of comprehensive consumer advice in Strathclyde and Lothian Regions to the decision by Tayside Region to provide no advice on complaints under civil law.

3.46 Existing Consumer Advice Centres in Scotland are listed at Table 3, page 40. Three of these were set up before reorganisation by the Town Councils of Greenock and East Kilbride and by the Citizens Advice Bureau in Edinburgh. By the end of 1975 Strathclyde Regional Council already had in hand the setting up of CACs in central Glasgow and Paisley. The Paisley CAC was opened in 1976.

3.47 On 30 December 1975 the Government announced, as part of a national programme to improve advice and help for consumers ("The Attack on Inflation" (Cmdd. 6151) grants to local authorities for new Consumer Advice Centres. Five fixed CACs and four mobile units were approved for grant aid in Scotland:

Aberdeen (in operation) - Grampian Regional Council
Edinburgh - Lothian Regional Council
Lothian Region (in operation) - Mobile Unit - Lothian Regional Council
Hamilton - Strathclyde Regional Council
Irvine - " " " 
3.47/contd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Strathclyde</td>
<td>mobile unit</td>
<td>Strathclyde Regional Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(in operation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Strathclyde</td>
<td>mobile unit</td>
<td>Strathclyde Regional Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(in operation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow Area</td>
<td>mobile unit</td>
<td>Strathclyde Regional Council</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(in operation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lerwick</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shetland Islands Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(in operation)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

The grants, totalling almost £250,000 for Scotland, included the setting up costs of the centres and running costs until the end of March 1977. They represented an 18% share for Scotland of all UK grants. On the other hand, one Local Authority was refused grant aid for a project (Western Isles Council) and seven Scottish Local Authorities did not apply for grant aid. (see para. 3.54 on finance)

3.48 Consumer Advice Centres offer the following services to the public:

(a) **Pre-shopping information:**
   When the consumer knows what he wants to find out and the CAC provides the facts.

(b) **Pre-shopping Advice:**
   When the consumer needs advice in order to make an informed choice based on personal requirements. The CAC adviser needs to extract from the consumer information on his/her needs and preferences and explain the range of products fitting those circumstances.

(c) **Consumer Education:**
   A primary function of the CAC: this is normally done by use of the media, by information displays, by giving talks to all sort of organisations and by arrangements with schools to provide consumer education.

(d) **Consumer Complaints:**
   Where the consumer has a justifiable complaint then the CAC can:
   
   (i) refer complaints to the appropriate agency under criminal legislation;
   (ii) advise consumers how to deal with the matter themselves;
   (iii) provide a mediation or conciliation service between consumer and trader;
   (iv) advise the consumer on ways of obtaining redress

(e) **Advice to Tradesmen and Shops**
   The CAC is not a partisan body and is also available for advice to retailers who need information about their legal responsibilities and rights.

3.49 **Staffing**

The numbers of staff employed in Consumer Advice Centres is shown in Table 3. Appointees to senior posts in CACs tend to be graduates, some with experience in fields related to Consumer Advice work. A uniform policy in staff appointments
has been adopted based on the recommendations of a
Department of Prices and Consumer Protection Working
Party on Consumer Advice Centre management and training.
Hence the uniformity in numbers of staff in each centre.
Each of the local authority centres is under the direct
control of the Regional Director of Consumer Protection.
Complex issues, criminal or civil, are dealt with by
Senior Inspectors from the Consumer Protection Departments.

3.50 Training

All staff employed in CACs undergo training as a condition
of service. Until early 1976 most training for CAC staff
was conducted by the Consumers' Association in courses
including:

(a) A three-week Legal and Information Course
(b) A one-week Pre-shopping Advice Foundation Course
(c) One week Product Courses (3)

Most staff in post before 1976, including the staff of the
Edinburgh CAB Consumer Advice Centre, attended CA training
centres. The CA legal course was, however, based on English
Law and was unsuitable for Scottish CAC staff. To remedy
this a Consumer Advice Centre Basic Intensive Course of
15 days duration was organised by Queens College, Glasgow,
in association with Strathclyde Regional Consumer Protection
Department to train Scottish CAC staff. The course was based
on recommendations of the NPCP Working Party on Consumer Advice
Centre staff training and covers consumer law in Scotland.
Two such courses were organised during 1976 and other
advanced training is being planned. Initially all CAC staff
in Strathclyde and in Grampian have attended this basic
training course.

In-service training is given to CAC staff on a continuing
basis. Most officers receive "experience" training under the
direction of experienced staff, e.g. Lothian Region CAB
mobile unit staff trained in the Edinburgh CAB/CAC prior to
the introduction of the mobile unit service.

3.51 Information Provision to Consumer Advice Centres

Most of the formal information available to CACs is provided
through the Consumers' Association General Information Service.
This service, costing an initial £750 + VAT in the first year
and £650 + VAT thereafter comprises:

(i) Directory of Information Sources
(ii) Directory Updating Service
(iii) Daily Consumer News Sheet containing abstracts of
items or consumer affairs of concern to consumers
(iv) Which? and CA Consumer Publications
(v) Lists of Manufacturers
(vi) Weekly News Bulletin: Changes in the law, new codes
of practice, details of new products on the market, etc.
(vii) Enquiry Service: Consumers' Association provide an
Advice Centre Servicing Unit which can be consulted
by subscribing CACs on matters which they cannot resolve
themselves. The A.C.S.U. also prepares the weekly news
bulletin.
(viii) Information Sheets: Information Sheets and booklets are prepared periodically for advice centres.

In addition CACs receive information from the Department of Consumer Protection and the Office of Fair Trading. Further local information sources are organised by individual CAC Managers. The four colleges of Home Economics in Scotland are becoming increasingly involved in the provision of information and testing services to CACs.

3.52 Location and Access

Table 3 gives details of the addresses and opening times of the fixed CACs in operation at 1 March, 1977. All of the fixed centres shown are centrally situated in cities and towns near to shopping centres and easily accessible by public transport. The East Kilbride and Greenock centres are attached to District Council Offices and the CAB Consumer Advice Centre forms an integral part of the Citizens Advice Bureau premises at Dundas Street in Edinburgh. The Paisley Centre is well situated as part of a pedestrian shopping precinct, and the Grampian Advice Centre is located, together with the CAB, on a main road within two minutes walk of the main Aberdeen Shopping Centre. The remaining centres tend to be more remote from shopping centres and are unlikely to be visually apparent to casual shoppers.

East Kilbride CAC, Shetland CAC and the CAB centre in Edinburgh are particularly badly located in this respect. All centres are open during normal office hours and the Strathclyde Centres are open all day Saturday, except Greenock which closes at 12.30 on Saturdays. None of the centres open in the evening.

3.53 Typical Premises

(i) Grampian:
Formerly a car showroom, the premises are bright, roomy and attractively decorated without being 'flashy'. They are shared with Aberdeen CAB with whom working arrangements are amicable, enquirers being referred to the appropriate agency to deal with the problem at hand. The centre is well provided with posters and pigeon-holed display stands holding adequate stocks of advice leaflets. No demonstrations of goods are on display although room is available. Large "shop window" available, covered in posters.

(ii) CAB, Edinburgh:
A small room within the main Citizens Advice Bureau premises in Edinburgh. A few posters and leaflets were on display within the room. Adequate stocks of leaflets were available on a table at the end of the hallway near the enquiry office for CAB. No demonstrations of goods are given on the premises due to shortage of space; no 'shop window' space available.
(iii) Shetland:
A room within local authority premises, stocks of leaflets are kept; no demonstrations of goods are given on the premises; small 'shop window' available.

(iv) East Kilbride:
A small cramped main reception room with separate Manager's office and interview room. The walls are well covered with advice posters and one wall is shelved holding adequate stocks of advice leaflets. No demonstrations or displays are possible due to lack of space; no 'shop window' available. An interconnecting door gives access to the East Kilbride Citizens Advice Bureau.

(v) Greenock:
Part of a modern outbuilding of Inverclyde District Council Offices the centre has a substantial 'shop window' in which displays and demonstrations relating to goods and services are shown. The interior premises are bright and very modern. Offices are available for the Manager of the Consumer Advice Centre, the Manager of the Information Centre and an interview room. Meeting rooms are provided for District Councillors to meet their constituents. Adequate posters for both consumer advice, tourism and general information are displayed on the premises.

(vi) Paisley:
An ultra-modern shop located in a pedestrian shopping precinct. Regular displays of goods with advice material are featured in the shop window and within the centre. An office for the Manager and an interview room are available within the centre. Adequate provision is made for advice leaflets and posters.

3.54 Finance
The local authority CACs are financed through the Regional Council Consumer Protection Department budget. The majority of both fixed centres and mobile CACs were, as explained above, completely funded by Government grants totalling about £250,000 to cover setting up and running costs up to 31 March 1977. Approximate annual running costs for CACs in Strathclyde are estimated at £25,000 per fixed centre and £13,000 per mobile centre. The Grampian Advice Centre costs approximately £31,000 and Shetland CAC approximately £6,900. The Government announced on 22 November 1976 that the Department of Prices and Consumer Protection would be making available further grants to maintain the coverage of consumer advice centres for one year at the 31 March 1977 level. Applications for these grants were invited by the Government on 10 February, 1977.

3.55 The work of CACs
Average numbers of enquiries and complaints received by various CACs are given in Table 4, page 41. The number of "successfully" resolved complaints for each CAC is not available but Managers state that most justifiable complaints
complaints/ are resolved, with the complainer receiving redress from the trader. An indication of the success achieved in the pursuit of consumer complaints may be obtained from figures given by Strathclyde Regional Council for the number of consumer enquiries dealt with by the Consumer Protection Department including CACs in the year 1975-76:–

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Enquiries</th>
<th>Number Pursued on Behalf of Consumers</th>
<th>Number Resolved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9800</td>
<td>4072</td>
<td>5927</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reason given for the number resolved being higher than the number pursued is accounted for by consumers, who after receiving advice from the Department, successfully resolved their own complaints and notified the Consumer Protection Department of this success. Strathclyde record the amount of compensation obtained on behalf of consumers in 1975/76 as £149,699 (Annual Report of Director of Consumer Protection).

3.56 All CACs take action on behalf of consumers with justifiable complaints. This action may take the form of a letter to the trader concerned or a visit or both to attempt to mediate between the parties. The number of pre-shopping counselling enquiries for all centres is disappointingly low. Managers of the CACs say that the centres have concentrated initially on dealing with consumer complaints and providing consumer education through talks to organisations and schools; pre-shopping counselling service has therefore not been fully promoted. The enforcement role of some of the local authority CAC staff may be an inhibiting factor in the degree to which the centre will take consumer advice and complaints. All complaints with criminal implications are passed to the Consumer Protection Department for investigation. An experienced Consumer Protection Officer is normally attached to a local authority CAC to deal with complex enquiries or complaints. The local authority CAC does not accept a partisan role in dealing with consumer complaints. It provides a mediation and conciliation service to try to resolve disputes between customer and trader. In cases where both parties agree the CAC staff will act as arbiters. Where a dispute cannot be settled the complainer will be advised how to enforce his rights. The Edinburgh CAB Consumer Advice Centre on the other hand, like CABx generally, takes a more partisan role in relation to what they consider to be justifiable consumer complaints. The adviser will if necessary assist the client to take his complaint to Court and would provide support, if the client wishes after legal advice, in using the new Summary Cause procedure in the Sheriff Courts. An arbitration scheme for building work, joinery and decorating disputes has been established by the Centre Manager in co-operation with a group of Edinburgh surveyors.
3.57 The 'clients' of both local authority and CAC centres have tended to come from the middle classes although CAC Managers claim that more and more people of working class origin are bringing complaints to the centres. Almost exclusively middle class clients use the Pre-shopping Advice and Counselling services. All Managers are in agreement that a great need exists to 'sell' these services, which are not generally well known by the public, using the media and in particular television. None of the CACs have yet considered advertising on television because of cost.

3.58 The Mobile CACs have had a difficult task in establishing themselves and making their presence known to the public. Experiments are still proceeding with routes, sites and time-tabling. The Consumer Protection Directorate in both Strathclyde and Lothian have indicated that lessons have been learned and there is now an up-swing in the use of these centres as the public became aware of a regular presence in the locality.

3.59 Feedback from CACs

Information about consumer complaints and trading practices obtained through enquiries to all CACs, and also CABx, in the Region is collated by the Regional Consumer Protection Department and fed back to the office of Fair Trading. These contribute to decisions at national level whether new legislation is required, how Codes of Practice are working and the extent to which consumer protection is adequate.

3.60 Related Services

The Consumer Advice Centres cannot be looked at in isolation in the field of advice to consumers of goods and services. They are an integral part of the Consumer Protection Department Service within the Regional Authority and advice on consumer enquiries and complaints is also available from 30 of the 33 Consumer Protection Department offices in Scotland. Only in Tayside Region are the local authority Consumer Protection Departments prohibited from offering some consumer advice on civil law matters either directly or indirectly. In Grampian Region the CAC serves the area surrounding Aberdeen. Outwith Aberdeen consumer advice and complaints are dealt with by the Consumer Protection Department from its headquarters in Aberdeen and sub-regional office in Elgin. Provision has also been made for the Regional Council Area offices at Aboyne, Alford, Bucksburn, Culte, Ellon, Fraserburgh, Huntly, Inverurie, Keith, Peterhead and Turriff to act as centres to accept consumer enquiries and complaints. These enquiries and complaints will be referred to the Consumer Protection Department who intend to hold 'surgeries' at these centres. Pre-shopping enquiries will be referred to the CAC in Aberdeen. In Strathclyde, Consumer Advice is available at each Consumer Protection Department office throughout the Region. These offices are located at Ayr, Coatbridge, Dumbarton, Dunoon, Glasgow, Hamilton, Kilmarnock and Paisley. Posters giving
the addresses and telephone numbers of every Consumer Protection Office, Consumer Advice Centre and Citizens Advice Bureau in Strathclyde have been distributed throughout the region. Complaints and enquiry forms are available at outlets such as police offices, libraries, information centres, rent offices, area and district offices and mobile units throughout the Region. Some Regional authorities decided not to provide Pre-shopping Advice and Counselling but deal with consumer enquiries or complaints either through their own Consumer Protection Departments or by the provision of support to CABx. Fife Regional Council for example as described above, provide the services of a senior officer from the Consumer Protection Department to hold 'surgeries' at CABx and to advise the CAB volunteers. In the past this Department advised and assisted consumers in taking their complaints through the former Sheriff Small Debts Courts. Borders Regional Council employ a Consumer Advisory Officer to deal with complaints received at the Consumer Protection Department headquarters and to liaise with and assist the CABx in the Region to deal with consumer complaints.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3</th>
<th>FIXED CENTRES</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>NO. OF STAFF</th>
<th>TELEPHONE NO.</th>
<th>HOURS OF OPENING</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CRANPIAN</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grampian Advice Centre</td>
<td>70 College Street, Aberdeen</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0224 20278/9</td>
<td>9 a.m.-5 p.m. (Monday-Friday)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LOTHIAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizens Advice Bureau</td>
<td>58 Dundas Street, Edinburgh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>031 557 1500</td>
<td>9.30 a.m.-4.30 p.m. (Mon.-Fri.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lothian Regional Council Mobile Consumer Advice Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SHELTAND</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shetland Consumer Advice Centre</td>
<td>Stouts Court, Commercial Rd., Lerwick</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0595 3864</td>
<td>10.30 a.m.-1 p.m. 2.00-4.00 p.m. (Mon.-Fri.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STRATHCLYDE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>East Kilbride Consumer Advice Centre</td>
<td>Civic Centre, East Kilbride</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>035 52 20777</td>
<td>8.45 a.m.-4.45 p.m. (Mon.-Fri.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greenock Information &amp; Advice Centre</td>
<td>23 Clyde Square, Greenock</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0475 24400</td>
<td>8.30 a.m.-4.45 p.m. (Mon.-Fri.) 8.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m. (Saturday)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paisley Consumer Advice Centre</td>
<td>50 Central Way, Paisley</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>041 887 7632</td>
<td>8.45 a.m.-4.45 p.m. (Mon.-Sat.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Strathclyde Mobile Consumer Advice Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Strathclyde Mobile Consumer Advice Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow Area Consumer Advice Centre (mobile)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>5. Greenock Information and Advice Centre</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>320</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4**

**Pre-Shopping Consultation**

**Average per Month**

**Complaints**

**General Enquiries**

**Fixed Centres**
E - HOUSING ADVICE CENTRES

3.61 There are at present eight Housing Advice Centres (HACs) in Scotland. Four of these - in Edinburgh, Dundee, Paisley and Haddington - are operated by District Councils. The other four - at Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and a peripatetic service in Perthshire, are run by SHELTER. All of these centres have been set up since 1970. District Council HACs also existed for a time in Aberdeen (where the HAC was turned into a District Council general information centre) and in Glasgow (where the HAC was closed - very quietly and presumably for reasons of economy- towards the end of 1976). Its former premises now house the land clearance and House Improvement Section of the District Department of Administration and Legal Services. We look firstly at the common organisational characteristics of these centres, secondly at the type of work they undertake and lastly we shall try to assess how effective HACs have been in the Scottish context and their potential for future development. (SHAC indicates a centre run by SHELTER; DC are run by the District Council)

3.62 Location and Access

All but one (Perthshire SHAC) of the eight main centres are centrally situated in cities or large towns. This means that these centres are easily accessible by public transport and are usually close to shopping centres and the offices of local authority departments and other public agencies. Of the four District Council HACs, for example, Edinburgh HAC is next door to the main office of Edinburgh District Council's Housing Department; Paisley HAC is across the road from the office complex which houses Renfrew District Council; both Haddington and Dundee HAC are housed in the offices of their District's Housing Department. All of the urban HACs are open during normal office hours four and a half or five days a week. None of these centres open in the evening or at weekends. Regular hours are not kept by SHELTER's Perthshire Centre which is a one man outfit and is based at the project worker's home in Comrie, although he hopes in the future to obtain the use of office premises in Perth. The Paisley HAC will shortly begin holding weekly advice sessions in District Council offices at Barrhead and Renfrew and hope to extend such sessions to smaller towns in Renfrew in the future.

3.63 Staffing

Table 5 gives details of the staff employed by HACs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Advisory</th>
<th>Number of Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>SHAC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>SHAC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>SHAC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haddington</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paisley</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perthshire</td>
<td>SHAC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.63/contd.

District Council HACs tend to recruit staff who have had experience of local authority work, principally in Housing Departments, while those employed by Shelter HACs have more varied backgrounds. Training tends to take place 'on the job' although the staff of some HACs have taken part in joint training sessions with other agencies in the recent past. For instance, the staff of SHELTER's Edinburgh HAC have attended sessions on Welfare Rights, squatting, Rights to fuel etc. run by the Citizens Rights Office and the staff of the District Council HAC in Edinburgh have attended a course on the Role of the Building Societies in providing finance for house purchase run by the Building Societies Association.

3.64 Finance

The running costs of District Council HACs are normally a part of the total Housing Department budget. SHELTER HACs are funded through SHELTER's national organisation. Two of these centres, Edinburgh and Glasgow (for an advice centre in Maryhill Road which has now closed) formerly received some support through local authority grants but no longer do so.

3.65 The work of HACs

The information available about the total number of enquiries dealt with by HACs during 1975 or during the latest annual period available is shown in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Number of Enquiries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen SHAC</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee DC</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh SHAC</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh DC</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow SHAC</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haddington DC</td>
<td>Not Known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paisley DC</td>
<td>10,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perthshire SHAC</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first thing to be said about the information conveyed in Table 6 is that it is almost meaningless for comparative purposes. HACs have no common system of recording or categorisation so that any attempt to compare their work in quantitative terms is bound to be highly misleading. Instead, although we cannot give an exhaustive account of each centre's work, we shall attempt to indicate in a broad way the principal concerns and areas of work of individual centres. Thus, while each centre may encounter a very wide range of problems and enquiries in each sector of the housing market, we shall be examining in general terms the different housing problems thrown up by regional and local differences in the structure of the housing market.
Aberdeen (SHAC): deals mostly with the problems of people trying to get council houses. Aberdeen has experienced severe housing pressure in the last few years due to the boom conditions created by the development of offshore oil fields. However, a high building rate in the last year or so has relatively eased the problems of those on the Council waiting list. The Centre has recently begun to deal with an increasing number of enquiries from other parts of Grampian and from Highland Regions.

Dundee (DC): Private tenants and those seeking mortgages at the 'bottom end' of the house purchase market are the principal groups using the Dundee HAC. The composition of the Centre's clientele is almost certainly influenced by the physical location of the Centre which consists of an end booth on the Housing Department's main reception counter together with a table set on a dais to the side of this counter next to a large window looking onto the street. All the centre's clients are referred through the main reception desk so that council tenants or prospective tenants are likely to use the Centre only when they have first seen someone in the main Housing Department proper and consider they have not received satisfaction there.

Edinburgh (SHAC): again deals mostly with problems relating to local authority housing (principally eligibility for housing, rent arrears and repairs) and to private tenancies.

Edinburgh (DC): is involved chiefly with problems of private tenants (rent fixing, landlord/tenant disputes etc.), house purchase, Housing Associations. It has links with Livingston New Town where houses are available relatively easily at present.

Glasgow (SHAC): most clients are seeking council housing and eligibility is a crucial issue. This is particularly true of separated women (where the man is the tenant of a council house) and of people with past rent arrears owing to the Council.

Haddington (DC): deals mostly with Council tenants and is largely integrated into East Lothian District's Housing Department. The Centre's adviser is also responsible for the administration of the house repairs system in the Haddington area, for keeping the waiting list up to date and for operating the District's house exchange bureau.

Paisley (DC): deals mainly with problems of private tenants (particularly rent fixing) and with house purchase.

Perthshire (SHAC): is mainly involved in dealing with the housing problems of travelling people and with tied housing. The organiser aims at obtaining suitable premises in Perth from which to operate, instead of his own home.

A recent report "Housing Advice Centres", published by the Centre for Environmental Studies (London) and SHELTER (referred to from now on as the CES Report) based on a national study of HACs concluded that as between local authority and voluntary HACs:
"there is no difference attributable to the different kinds of centre and it is therefore impossible to say that one kind is 'better' than the other. As we have seen the economic background, the state of the housing market, the HACs access to resources and the extent of the HAC's determination to find positive solutions were more crucial conditions of their effectiveness that whether they were local authority or voluntary organisations."

There seems to be a clear difference in approach between the two kinds of centre in Scotland. District Council centres are geared to advising and informing clients - SHELTER centres to taking action on a client's behalf wherever possible. While District Council centres are undoubtedly constrained by their links with the local authority their staffs point to what the CES Report calls an 'in house capability', through their knowledge of the District Council structure and personal contacts with officials, to help clients in particular cases.

A survey of the HAC clients carried out for the CES Report showed that:
"The clients of the centres are mainly manual workers, living in poor conditions, on low incomes. Many of them are long term residents in the area suggesting that they are people who are firmly located at the bottom of the housing market with consequently limited prospects, rather than newcomers who might have more resources at their command given some expert advice on how to deploy them in the local market".

It is not possible to say how accurately this describes the clients of Scotland's eight HACs although it is undoubtedly true of the clients of some centres. Curiously the two Scottish HACs studied by the CES Researchers no longer exist. One was the Glasgow District Council HAC which closed last year, the other was a centre in Govan run by ASSIST. This is now a Community Information Centre which no longer has links with ASSIST. ASSIST, a locally based agency which rehabilitates old tenement property is praised in the CES Report for "its ability to introduce a new kind of solution to improvement problems" and its influence can be seen in the growth in the last year or two of community-based Housing Associations implementing Housing Action Area programmes in Glasgow and elsewhere. But for these reasons - its localised catchment area and specialised interest in rehabilitation - the ASSIST centre is untypical of HACs in general. In conclusion we can say only that there is very little systematic information on the usage of HACs in Scotland by different social groups and that the absence of this information makes it impossible to attempt any comparison between the work of different centres.

**Future Development**

The CES Report argues that the most important factors in the success of a HAC are:
"whether extra houses exist and whether the HAC has the power to allocate them. Failing this, consideration must be given whether the HAC can influence policies which would enable more housing to be made available for its clients".
3.69/contd.

This implies firstly that HACs should have access to their own resources e.g. hard-to-let council property or perhaps housing association property. SHELTER's Centres in Edinburgh and Glasgow formerly had close links with housing associations in those cities (some of which were partly financed by SHELTER). However, since the creation of the Housing Corporation to provide state funds for housing associations this is no longer the case. Of the local authority centres, Dundee HAC has access to 'Section 31 lettings' - houses which have been empty for 28 days and have been offered to, and refused by, four priority applicants on the waiting list. These are posted up in the Housing Department and are available to anyone in Dundee who is eligible for local authority housing. Paisley HAC, faced with a shortage of local authority funds for house purchase in 1975, came to a special arrangement with a major building society to provide loans for its clients. It is fair to say, however, that many HAC workers would value independence, the ability to highlight the shortcomings of present policies and to press for changes, more highly than acquiring a say in the allocation of houses.

The second implication is that HACs should develop a Research and policy feedback role. This is something Scottish HACs are doing at present. Paisley HAC, for instance, has been closely involved in the preparation of a five-year housing needs plan for the District while the SHELTER HACs provide much of the information for Reports produced by SHELTER's national organisation and have published reports highlighting housing problems in their own areas. Glasgow SHAC is one of the bodies which has submitted evidence to the sub-committee reviewing Glasgow District's house letting regulations. However, as the CES Report notes it is vital that local authorities and other agencies 'must accept the seriousness and significance of the feedback role'. There is some evidence to suggest that this has yet to happen in Scotland.
Planning is an issue of vital concern to many consumers - particularly in "redevelopment" and "expansion" areas - carrying implication on matters ranging from the physical and social structure of a community to the design of a particular house. The important bearing of planning on the lives of many people has been recognised in the statutorily required introduction of public participation in major aspects of the planning process. If such participation is to be effective people will need access to information and advice on planning matters - as equally they do when they get involved in the "everyday" operations of the planning system.

A survey undertaken in Glasgow in 1973 by the Strathclyde Area suggests that - at least in an area which has for a number of years been subject to considerable redevelopment - a substantial proportion of people make enquiries at Local Authority Planning Departments. The 1,000 sample survey yielded a 79% response rate and of these, some 14% had at some time contacted the planning office of the Local Authority. The enquiries were on road proposals, house clearance and redevelopment.

The SCC wrote regarding their information services to the Planning Departments of the Regional and Islands Councils and of those District Councils with planning functions (i.e. excluding District Councils in Dumfries and Galloway, Borders and Highland Regions): an overall response rate of almost 80% was achieved.

In their replies, most of the Councils stated that planning information and advice could be obtained at their headquarters and, where they exist, divisional and sub-offices. Some of the regional authorities which operate in a two-tier planning authority framework pointed out that their work was at some remove from most of the planning issues of immediate concern to enquirers, which tend to involve District Council functions. Central Regional Council added that in such cases they tried to help enquirers, but they often had to refer them to a District Office.

In addition to this sort of basic information and advice service some Councils have introduced measures to improve access for consumers wishing advice on planning matters. All the Councils concerned are District Councils - more involved with specifically local planning issues than Regional Authorities in a two-tier planning framework. Dundee District Council has established a Section of its Department in a "shop window" location where the public can make enquiries on all aspects of planning. Angus District Council is setting up local planning surgeries at Arbroath and Montrose, the two major centres outside Forfar, where the District headquarters are located. The intention is that, probably on a one day a week basis, local planning applications can be inspected and planning advice, from a planning assistant, made available. Stirling District Council Planning Department holds weekly "clinics" at Balfron and Callander and also has a small mobile information unit which it is planned to use to visit the more remote communities in the area on a regular basis. Perth and Kinross District Council have taken the unusual step of recruiting an architect/planner specifically to guide enquirers in planning applications.
3.74 contd./

West Lothian District Council has established a "Planning Advice" service on the basis of sessions held once a month by a member of the planning staff in Bathgate, Whitburn, Broxburn and West Calder: all sessions run from 3.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. At a more area-specific level Edinburgh District Council operates a "planning workshop" in Leith - an area of the city subject to considerable redevelopment. All these developments are particularly praiseworthy in view of the very difficult staffing position in all Districts.

3.75

Many Planning Departments also distribute literature on aspects of their planning activities to members of the public. For example, Aberdeen District Council distribute copies of a planning handbook to people in the city. East Lothian District Council has circulated a leaflet on a "Planning Action Area" in Musselburgh to residents in the area. Stirling District Council has, together with other authorities involved, circulated leaflets to people in the area affected by the Loch Lomond subject plan. A further interesting development in literature related to planning is a specially prepared Scottish version of the "Fact-Bank". This is a Card Index System which has been developed as part of the Department of the Environment scheme to provide instant access to concise information on technical, legal, financial and other plans that might affect community plans.

3.76

Specialist planning advice, in the variety of forms described, has until recently been provided by Local Authority Departments. Nevertheless several Directors of Planning expressed to us the view that 'planning aid' by their officers might place planners in a position of working against their department or, equally wrong, preparing applications to the Council. In this context we can judge the value of an important addition within the last year to planning information and advice services. "Planning Aid" started in Scotland on an experimental basis in June 1976, working from the Planning Exchange, Glasgow*. This is a non-official source of advice on planning issues for both individuals and community groups, provided by volunteers from Local Authority Planning Departments, University and College Planning Departments and private Planning Consultancies. Two project officers (one for the West of Scotland, the other for the East) have been appointed for one year (from November 1976) under the Job Creation Programme to co-ordinate the development of the service throughout Scotland. Groups of planners have so far formed to provide Planning Aid services operating from Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee, and a service in Aberdeen is planned to start shortly. In Dundee contact with the service is through the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art: in Edinburgh through the CAB Services. Interviews are then usually held in the client's home. In Glasgow weekly "clinics" are held at the Bath Street CAB. Since the Glasgow group is the only Planning Aid Service in the entire West of Scotland, it is prepared to deal with enquiries from places beyond the Clydeside conurbation. Such enquiries have been received from as far as Aviemore and Wester Ross and are normally dealt with by correspondence. In the three months from November 1976 to end January 1977, some

*Planning Exchange will be publishing a report on the first year of operation of the Planning Aid Service at the end of 1977.
25 enquiries were handled by members of the Planning Aid group. These enquiries have come largely from individuals, although two residents' associations have recently sought help in formulating objections to developments facing their communities. The other subjects raised in enquiries for the Glasgow service include: rights of appeal against planning permission refusal; compulsory purchase; house extensions; compensation; housing proposals; consultations and objection rights in the planning process; planning advertisements. The services in Glasgow, as in other parts of Scotland, expect to be more heavily used as its existence is publicised through contact of Planning Aid personnel with volunteer organisations and as questions of referral from other advice agencies to the service are ironed out with those agencies.
G - LEGAL ADVICE CENTRES

3.77 Few would now dispute that there is an "unmet need for legal services" in Scotland. This need arises, basically, from the failure of solicitors in private practice to meet the need. Reasons for this are not difficult to find. First, although some solicitors are opening branches in housing schemes and in the suburbs a look at the Scottish Law Directory for 1977 shows that nearly all city firms are still situated centrally. They are not easily accessible to a large proportion of the most disadvantaged citizens.

Second, the areas of the law with which a solicitor in private practice dealing with individual clients has traditionally been concerned have been property law (conveyancing, trusts and the winding up of estates) and family law, particularly divorce, rather than the issues of welfare, housing or consumer law which concern people on a low income.

Third, Legal Aid which provides for representation in the civil and criminal courts, and the Legal Advice and Assistance Scheme, are both confined to such a low level of income that many who need legal advice are excluded from their benefits. Fourth, there appears to be widespread hesitancy about consulting a solicitor partly for financial reasons, partly through lack of understanding about the use to be made of the law by ordinary citizens.

3.78 Quantification of the unmet need is impossible but some idea of the size of the problem can be seen from the large number of cases dealt with by the existing agencies. It has been estimated by Philip Myers of the University of Glasgow, that existing voluntary legal advice centres operating on a very restricted basis in a few areas of Glasgow are dealing with over 5,000 cases per year. In the first year of operation the Dundee legal advice centre dealt with about 1,800 enquiries. S.A.C.A.B. have estimated that of the 200,000 enquiries that C.A.Bx handle every year about 75% have some legal component. The English response to this "unmet need" has been the setting up, with the encouragement of the Lord Chancellor, of neighbourhood law centres mainly in the large cities staffed by full-time legal staff who give free legal advice and assistance. In England and Wales there are estimated to be about 24 of these. In Scotland there are, as yet, none. There are, however, legal advice centres which go some way to deal with this "unmet need".

3.79 Legal Advice Centres are not an entirely new phenomena in Scotland. The Edinburgh Legal Dispensary was established in 1900 and the scheme run by Glasgow University Settlement in 1926. The last few years have, however, seen a considerable growth in the number of legal advice centres. In December 1975 it was estimated that there were 25 such centres in Scotland situated almost exclusively in the main cities. A variety of individuals and organisations have been responsible for setting up these centres.

3.80 In Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee the widest variety of legal advice centres operate. The Glasgow Legal Clinic operates from four centres at Maryhill, Cowanhill, Pollock and Milton. These open on a part-time basis, having one or more regular weekly sessions. The centres are in various premises, provided free, and are staffed by volunteer solicitors and apprentices. The Castlemilk centre, run in conjunction with the Family Services
Unit has weekly sessions and is staffed by partners of Glasgow legal firms. There is also the Blackhill centre, set up as a joint venture by Glasgow University and the Blackhill Community Development Association, on Church of Scotland premises, open once weekly, and staffed by practising lawyers, legal academics, apprentices and students. A similar centre has been set up in East Pollokshields by the University and the Glendale Community Centre. In Edinburgh, apart from the old-established Legal Dispensary, there are some six legal advice centres attached to social work area offices in outlying areas of the city, staffed by solicitors and having weekly sessions. These centres are attached to the area offices at Gilmerton, Craigmillar, Leith, Pilton, Muirhouse and Gorgie/Dalry. Dundee has a main legal advice centre in the centre of the city and a branch office in the Fintry housing scheme. There are also the legal clinics run by CABx. Until recently a legal advice clinic operated regularly from a mobile van which parked outside the Social Work Department in Easterhouse on Sunday mornings. This has now transferred to the Easterhouse CAB.

3.81 The Law Society’s official view is that it “entirely approves” of those legal advice centres which solicitors help to run and Guidelines were issued by the Society in 1974 to assist and control solicitors involved with them. Their attitude has, however, been described by some as “ambivalent” and local law societies have been critical of some centres. It should be noted that very many solicitors individually not only help to maintain legal advice centres but in some cases have helped set them up. Guidelines referred to above have been amended to allow self-referral in certain circumstances which will allow a solicitor at a legal advice centre to take up a case himself if necessary.

3.82 In this chapter, rather than attempt a superficial examination of the many legal advice centres, two will be described in some detail although without any implication that they are “typical”. Indeed it can be argued that there is no such thing as a “typical” legal advice centre there being what has been called by the Central Policy Review staff “a strange mix of provision”. (A Joint Framework for Social Policies HMSO 1975). The two centres are the Edinburgh Legal Dispensary and the Dundee Legal Advice Centre.

3.83 The Edinburgh Legal Dispensary was founded in 1900 to give free legal advice to poor persons and to allow young lawyers to acquire practice and skill in their profession. The Dundee Legal Advice Centre was set up in September 1974 by the Dundee Legal Advice Association with a branch in Dundee’s Fintry housing scheme opening in September 1975. The premises used by the Edinburgh Legal Dispensary are situated in the Old Quadrangle of Edinburgh University on the South Bridge, one of the city’s main shopping areas. The Dispensary is open from 6.30 pm on most Wednesdays throughout the year. The main premises of the Dundee Legal Advice Centre are also central in Dundee University property on the Perth Road. The Dundee centre opens for longer than most legal advice centres now having seven sessions per week throughout the year. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays it is open from 3-5 pm;
3.83 contd/.

on Wednesdays 2-4 pm and 7-8 pm; and on Saturdays 10-12 a.m.
The Fintry branch, situated in the large housing scheme in the
north of the city is open on Thursdays from 7-8.30 p.m.
at Fintry Church Hall. What would be one of the main costs in
each case - premises - are provided free by Dundee and
Edinburgh universities. Other expenses of the Dundee Legal
Advice Centre are met from the Region and District and
there is also support from grants, donations, subscriptions
and fund-raising ventures. The Edinburgh Legal Dispensary relies
on legacies left to them over the years.

3.84

The complexity and range of questions that may be asked make
it essential that a high quality of advice be maintained. The
standard of advice given is inseparable from the qualifications
and practical experience of those staffing the centres.
The Edinburgh Legal Dispensary has from the beginning been
staffed by local solicitors on an unpaid and voluntary basis.
In some cases these solicitors have considerable professional
experience in dealing with clients' problems. The role of the
students in the Dispensary is restricted to encouraging them
to sit in on interviews and thus gain knowledge of the art of
interviewing clients and eliciting information from them. At
present 12 solicitors and 32 students are involved with
the Dispensary. At each session two or three solicitors are on
duty.

3.85

The Dundee Legal Advice Centre divides its advisers, also
voluntary and unpaid, into Senior and Student Advisers. The
Senior Advisers are mostly, but not all, legal academics.
One is, for example, a former deputy Town Clerk. The Student
Advisers are usually third or fourth year law students or
apprentices. No strict rule is laid down that they must be
senior students. In some cases, moreover, they have had
prior relevant work experience, for example, in a
sheriff-clerk's or solicitors' office. At present there are
10 Senior and 15 Student Advisers involved in the Centre's work.
Each session is generally staffed by a team of two Senior and
three or four Student Advisers.

3.86

These legal advice centres and others, being mostly organised
and staffed by legal academics, solicitors, apprentices or
law students, are not perhaps so liable to run into the same
difficulties as to quality of advice as other kinds of centre
might. The staff of these centres are in many cases highly
qualified and experienced in the fields in which they
operate. There is therefore less of a problem with training
and ensuring that advice given is accurate. Care is taken that
unqualified or inexperienced staff are supervised. The Dundee
Centre, in their instructional notes for advisers, make sure
that the Student Advisers are closely supervised. A Student
Adviser may draft but not sign letters and may only "participate"
with a Senior Adviser in giving advice. As noted before the
students at the Edinburgh Legal Dispensary act as observers
only.

3.87

It is, of course, difficult to make any objective check on the
quality of advice given but by the yardstick of the average
solicitors' office it is clear that in certain fields (welfare,
3.87/contd.

consumer and housing law) more and perhaps better advice is sought and obtained at these centres. And, of course, it is provided free.

3.88

The Edinburgh Legal Dispensary's Statistical Report of cases for the year 1 March 1975 - 28 February 1976 is as follows:

**Statistical Report for the year 1 March 1975 to 28 February 1976**

(Figures in brackets refer to Previous Year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Category</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>13(18)</td>
<td>5.3(7.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matrimonial (General)</td>
<td>9(29)</td>
<td>3.6(12.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aliment</td>
<td>4(-)</td>
<td>1.6(-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>2(-)</td>
<td>0.8(-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landlord/Tenant/Housing</td>
<td>60(42)</td>
<td>24.2(17.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt</td>
<td>19(5)</td>
<td>7.7(2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract/Consumer</td>
<td>42(30)</td>
<td>17.0(12.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Disputes</td>
<td>19(14)</td>
<td>7.7(5.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Injury</td>
<td>9(12)</td>
<td>3.6(5.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession</td>
<td>10(9)</td>
<td>4.0(3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Traffic (Accidents &amp; Offences)</td>
<td>15(14)</td>
<td>6.0(5.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal</td>
<td>16(27)</td>
<td>6.5(11.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>5(4)</td>
<td>2.0(1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbour Problems</td>
<td>4(3)</td>
<td>1.6(1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaints against Solicitors</td>
<td>4(-)</td>
<td>1.6(-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>12(25)</td>
<td>4.8(10.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>4(7)</td>
<td>1.6(2.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** 247(239)

3.89

The Dundee Legal Advice Centre's analysis is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Category</th>
<th>Period to 31.5.75</th>
<th>Period to 31.5.76</th>
<th>Period to 30.11.76</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare Benefits</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reparation</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxation</td>
<td>n/A</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Complaints</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTION TAKEN</td>
<td>Period to 31.5.75</td>
<td>Period to 31.5.76</td>
<td>Period to 30.11.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>59.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Action</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral to Solicitor</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Elsewhere</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Breakdown of "Further Action" in period to 30.11.76. as percentages of total cases:

- Researching Law: 6.1
- Filling Forms: 1.9
- Letters written on behalf of clients: 14.8
- Total: 22.8

In the six months to 30 November 1976 the Centre dealt with 675 new cases - about 28 new cases per week.

3.90 If a case cannot be dealt with by the simple giving of information or advice the next stage is to decide whether it should be referred to a solicitor or dealt with by the centre itself. The Edinburgh Legal Dispensary refers a very high proportion - estimated to be about 60% - to a solicitor. Self-referral is not allowed except in the case of an emergency. Normally under the Guidelines laid down by the Law Society, the client will be referred to a firm with which the solicitor at the Dispensary "is not connected". As observed these Guidelines have now been changed to allow self-referral in some circumstances.

To assist advice centres generally the Law Society in 1974 proposed referral lists which indicated the type of work each solicitor is prepared to undertake and so to help the enquirers make an informed choice of solicitor. These lists have now been updated and are available to CABx and other advice centres who refer clients to solicitors. There is, of course, no guarantee that if a solicitor indicates a speciality he is in fact competent in the field.

3.91 The Dundee Legal Advice Centre, however, as well as making referrals acts for clients by writing letters, making telephone calls or making personal visits. Some representation of clients before tribunals is also provided. An analysis of the figures (above) of the types of action taken by the Dundee centre shows that in the six months to 30 November, 1976 60% clients were given advice, 23% had further action (letters, telephone calls etc.) taken on their behalf, 14% were referred to a solicitor and 3% referred to someone other than a solicitor.

3.92 A survey (unpublished) carried out by the Scottish Consumer Council found among many respondents a wish for legal advice facilities nearer to their homes. It was felt that legal advice sources should operate in "working-class areas" and not in the "office belts" where they are seen to be situated at the moment. As one respondent said - "You want a place where you can go locally, some place you're used to going, where people would be straightforward and no messing about". Those legal advice centres situated in housing schemes and other working class areas help to meet this desire for local facilities but perhaps
the most interesting development for the future in Scotland is the project for an advice centre incorporating a CAB and Neighbourhood Law Centre in Castlemilk, Glasgow. This centre will be the first in Scotland and will be run by a staff of three full time lawyers working in conjunction with the CAB. Difficulties and delays have occurred but it is hoped to open the centre sometime in 1977.
The previous sections of this Chapter have dealt with the major
generalist and specialist agencies. There are some other agencies
which are also significant within the Scottish advice network
which are briefly described in this section.

Welfare Rights Agencies

The Citizens' Rights Office in Edinburgh gives information
and advice on welfare rights, housing, rent and rates rebates
and employment problems and provides free representation at
Supplementary Benefit, National Insurance, Rent and
Industrial Tribunals. This latter function is a particularly
important aspect of the work of C.R.O., through which it has
established a reputation throughout Scotland. The office is
situated in Central Edinburgh and open on Monday and Saturday
mornings and Tuesday to Friday afternoons. Approximately 250
people use the service each month; many of the enquiries being
from the elderly, homeless or single parents. As well as direct
enquiries, there are referrals from other agencies such as CABx.
There is a staff of three, supported by trained volunteers,
and plans to appoint a further two members of staff, one of
whom will be a community lawyer. Finance for the service is
provided by the Scottish Office and Lothian Regional Council.

In Aberdeen there have been a number of initiatives in this
field. There are two Citizens' Rights Offices situated in the
Torry and Kincorth housing schemes: both of these services
were begun and organised by the Social Work Department Community
Worker in Aberdeen. In addition two Aberdeen voluntary
organisations, the St.Katherines Club, and the Tillydrone Community
Centre have Welfare Rights Officers.

In addition Welfare Rights Officers are employed by
Strathclyde Regional Social Work Department based in Hamilton
and Ayr but these operate as specialist social workers.
Some CABx and neighbourhood advice centres provide advice and
in some cases advocacy service in Welfare rights matters. But
information from the CABx does not indicate that their staffs
include many specialists in Welfare rights and as has been
indicated above (para.3.19) a training school in this subject
is planned for 1977.

Portobello Community Advice Centre

The Portobello Community Advice Centre which opened in
October 1976 in an eastern suburb of Edinburgh is an impressive
example of co-operation and resource pooling between a number
of agencies to provide information and advice in a mixed
community of about 20,000 people. The agencies involved are
the Lothian Regional Social Work Department, Edinburgh CAB and
Portobello and Community Development Association (P.A.D.C.A.).
Portobello falls within the Craigentinny/Portobello area of
the Regional Social Work Department: however it is a considerable
distance from the area office situated in Craigentinny. The
Social Work Department consequently saw an Advice Centre in
Portobello as a means of reaching people in a peripheral part
of their area.
3.98 A management committee, composed of two representatives each of the three agencies involved, is responsible for running the centre. The centre is located centrally in Portobello on the High Street in austere premises rented from the Baptist Church. The rent and other costs of running the building are paid by grants from the Social Work Department and P.A.D.C.A. A pool of twelve workers from the Social Work Department and Edinburgh CAB, as well as the P.A.D.C.A. Community Worker man the morning and afternoon sessions held daily, Monday to Friday. The centre has a full time co-ordinator paid for by the Job Creation Programme.

3.99 In the first six weeks of 1977 the centre handled some 200 enquiries. The enquiries have covered Welfare Rights, housing and consumer problems. At present the centre is not undertaking tribunal representation but this is planned and the centre is helping to organise a course on this subject. The Advice Centre team are planning to use the centre as a basis for social work and action through, for example, the mobilisation for young volunteers to give help to housebound old people. In this proposed wider community involvement role of the centre there are obvious parallels with the neighbourhood advice centres described in Section C.

3.100 Nationalised Industry Consumer Councils

There are Consumer Councils attached to the nationalised electricity, gas, railway and shipping industries in Scotland, as well as the Scottish Postal and Telecommunications Boards. They are statutory bodies appointed by Central Government. In addition to monitoring the policy and operations of the industries concerned, the Councils deal with consumer complaints about the industries which have not been satisfactorily resolved by the industry. These complaints are largely handled by the Secretariats of the Consumer Councils: The Transport Users' and Post Office councils are based in Glasgow, the Fuel Consumer Councils in Edinburgh. There are district committee structures attached to the Gas and Electricity Consultative Councils and consumers can contact a local District Committee member with a complaint. The Consultative Councils are now handling between them about 9,000 enquiries a year. A full account of Consumer Council arrangements and procedures in Scotland appears in the SCC report on "Consumer Representation in the Nationalised Industries in Scotland" which forms Annex 1 of the NCC Report "Consumers and the Nationalised Industries" (HMSO 1976)

3.101 Specialised Advice

A number of specialised organisations give advice to their own members or the people for whom they are particularly concerned. It would be impossible to enumerate all of these. Examples are:-
Scottish Council for Single Parents, Gingerbread, Disablement Income Group, Women's Aid (in Glasgow). An interesting example of this sort of agency is the advice and information service for the elderly established by Age Concern Lothian in Castle Street, Edinburgh.
The office is open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday to Friday. A pool of twelve volunteers man the service; one adviser being
being../.

on duty at any one time. The Age Concern Scotland Senior Development Officer is in day-to-day charge of the service and the information back-up for the volunteers is being organised under her supervision. Some of the volunteers in the agency have undergone Age Concern training courses: there are regular training-orientated meetings of the volunteers. There are about 15-20 enquiries per week, but this is expected to increase as the service becomes better established and publicised.

3.102 All libraries are regarded by their users as natural sources of information. However, they do not normally offer suitable accommodation or personnel trained in advice giving as distinct from information provision. What they can do is offer facilities for displaying and distributing information material. As information centres they are naturally restricted to those who use them, not necessarily including many disadvantaged people who most need advice resources. Nevertheless in Cheshire, England, an elaborate network of advice has been based upon the library system. In most districts of Scotland it is normal practice to display information material in libraries. In this connection it is interesting to note that Falkirk District Council's information centre which gives information on the District, is the responsibility of the Council's Libraries Department.
CHAPTER 4 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 In this chapter we put forward for discussion major questions regarding the future of the local advice network in Scotland - accessibility, the balance between generalist and specialist agencies, the quality of advice, the independence issue. Finally we suggest a mechanism for implementing our proposals.

4.2 GENERAL

Information and advice are necessities in our society. Without easily available sources of information our rights and obligations written into legislation become confused and frightening traps for the unwary, rather than clear guidelines for a well organised society. Therefore we recommend that it should be a responsibility of all local authorities to ensure that trained sources of information and advice are available to the public within their area.

4.3 ACCESSIBILITY

It is clear that the situation in large parts of Scotland is unsatisfactory. There are inadequate advice resources in many parts of Scotland particularly rural areas. Even some large towns which are centres for people in the surrounding areas, such as Ayr (population 48,000), lack any substantial advice agency. This illustrates the haphazard way in which the advice network in Scotland has developed. The evidence in paragraph 2.2 indicates that people want advice in their own neighbourhood. What was said in group discussions about legal advice in community centres (para. 3.92) applies to other sources of advice. In para. 2.4, illustrated by the map in Appendix 2, we have shown the possibility of linking advice centres to the distribution of shopping centres.

4.4 We propose that as a rule of thumb regional planning should provide for advice services throughout their areas, based on the pattern of the distribution of shopping centres.

4.5 Deprived areas must be a special priority in the development of advice networks. The poor and disadvantaged, whilst needing advice on an even greater range of subjects than others, are actually less likely to get sound advice than the more prosperous members of society. The evidence on take-up of means-tested benefits (para. 1.5) gives some indication of the improvements which require to be made in advice services for the disadvantaged. We found that only ten out of 45 deprived areas in Strathclyde, singled out by the Regional Council for priority treatment in October 1976, had some form of advice agency. Four had CABx, five had other types of non-official, generalist Community Advice Centres, one had a Legal Advice Clinic. The full results are reported in Appendix 3.

4.6 We propose that Regional plans should include a commitment to provide advice agencies in all specified areas of deprivation particularly in older areas in the trauma of redevelopment.

4.7 Rural areas in Scotland suffer particularly from lack of advice agencies. This particularly is the case in Highland, Dumfries and Galloway and the more rural parts of Fife, Tayside and Grampian Regions. Not even towns such as Stranraer, Oban,
4.7 cont’d...
Peterhead, Elgin and St. Andrews which are centres for largely rural hinterlands possess advice agencies.

4.8 We propose that in rural areas, advice agencies should be established in central country towns and that, since this policy would still leave many people out of range of their services, alternative methods of delivery of advice in rural areas should be introduced. In particular there should be further experiment with mobile services providing general advice and with freephone facilities (para. 2.5)

4.9 Opening Times: A number of the agencies investigated, including some CABx, neighbourhood information centres and Strathclyde CACs, open either in the evenings or on Saturdays. There are, however, still many agencies which are open only during the normal working day, or some part of the day. This clearly prevents working families from making full use of the agencies.

4.10 We propose that priority be given to improving working hours of existing agencies so that they may be open throughout the day. Extensions into evenings and Saturdays should be experimented with. It is important for strategic agencies, perhaps in co-operation, to offer an out-of-hours telephone service on the pattern of the Samaritans (paras. 2.7 and 3.14)

4.11 In this connection, however, it is not now possible to run a full time advice bureau without some full time paid workers. We believe that grants for CABx should therefore include allowances for paid organisers as a matter of course. (paras. 3.4 and 3.17)

4.12 Publicity for the network: There is evidence that people do not know where to go for advice even when it is available. (Para. 3.12). We have referred to the efforts made by the CABx and by the Lothian Region enquiry centres to highlight their presence through "logos" and the like. In our survey regarding the legal advice logo a very high proportion of consumers recognised the symbol and knew in general terms what it stood for. This was partly because of extensive television advertising (para. 2.8)

4.13 We propose that there should be a common logo throughout Scotland for all information agencies, in order that consumers can know instantly where they can take their questions without inhibition or stigma. (We hope that this could be one of the first fruits of the increased co-operation which we propose between advice agencies of all kinds). Once accepted the logo should be advertised widely on all media – particularly television. We propose that this responsibility should rest with the Scottish Office. In addition we propose that there should be a page listing "Information Services" in all Scottish telephone directories.

4.14 BALANCE BETWEEN GENERALIST AND SPECIALIST AGENCIES
The survey undertaken for this report indicates that there are far more generalist than specialist agencies in Scotland. There are ten CACs (including five mobiles) and eight HACs on the specialist side as against 45 CABx and a large number of local authority general advice services and neighbourhood advice/information centres on the generalist side. Specialist agencies tend to be in the larger population centres (notably in the four big cities) where generalist agencies also operate: indeed in
Aberdeen, Greenock and Edinburgh, CACs share the same premises as a generalist advice agency. However, some towns have specialist but no generalist agencies; most notably Paisley has an HAC and CAC but no CAB. Lerwick has a CAB but nothing else. Yet while some people need a specialist service sometimes, everyone needs general advice fairly often. (para. 2.9)

We propose that priority in the development of a Scottish advice network should continue to be given to well spread generalist services. Specialist agencies, which we see as an essential back-up to generalist services, should be centralised in the large towns and cities. The main essential is that there should be close co-operation and institutional links between generalist and specialist agencies.

We suggested in our report on Nationalised Industry Consumer Councils that some Consumer Councils should have full-time staffed desks at centrally located advice agencies in areas of "dense population or special need" which lack a Consumer Council presence*. Various examples have been quoted in this report of 'experts' holding clinics in general advice services or even a specialist desk in a general bureau. We think this should be encouraged. Advice is too thin on the ground in Scotland for rigid demarcations (para. 3.22)

We urge the extension of more specialist service "clinics" in generalist agencies as a practical and relatively cheap means of providing specialist service. In particular cases full-time "specialist desks" at generalist agencies should be encouraged.

In rural areas, the emphasis should be overwhelmingly on generalist services. It is a waste of money and administrative effort not to make the fullest possible use of mobile services. Every available mobile service should as far as possible, be used as a general source of advice and information. We therefore propose that mobile services should be generalist not specialist.

Legal advice centres are a special case: their workers use specialist skills but their work covers a wide range of subjects. We urge that legal advice centres should be situated in all areas of high deprivation as well as in city centres.

We trust that evidence to the Royal Commission for Scottish Legal Services will reveal more clearly whether adequate legal advice is available to Scottish consumers and, if not, how it can best be provided.

* Consumers and the Nationalised Industries (HMSO) 1976 Annex 1 para. 15.7
4.19 QUALITY OF ADVICE

The evidence in Chapter 3 indicates that there is no common training pattern for advice workers. In the CAB service there is a developing system of tutor-training courses combined with regular refresher courses (para 3.20-3.21). Other agencies (such as the Lothian Region enquiry centre network) use intensive courses involving outside speakers and/or staff members, backed up with regular staff meetings to discuss problems arising from enquiries (para 3.30). Others again look to "experience on the job", often combined, as in the case of many neighbourhood centre workers, with occupational experience or a college/university course, closely related to the subjects advised on. Some advice agencies give very little training and regard a sympathetic approach as the main requirement for advisers. Most local advice information is given by officials with no specific training.

4.20 There are few shared training programmes for workers from different types of advice agency. Shelter and CAB workers have attended Welfare Rights Courses run by the Edinburgh Citizens Rights Office and Aberdeen CAB a course run by St. Katherine's Club; staff at Govan Community Advice Centre have been invited to join a CAB training course in September, 1977. Clearly joint training offers several advantages e.g. improved understanding of each others work and attitudes, improved overall quality of advice and economies of scale in training resources. Moreover there is advantage in joint training between volunteers and officials since it is important that consumers be able to rely on similar standards whatever the source of advice. We urge that there should be development of joint training facilities for workers in different advice agencies. We would also urge that in urban areas, training centres should be established for joint training. In rural areas the possibility should be examined of a peripatetic training team to visit small centres and to spend days on mobile vans.

4.21 Regarding information back-up for advice workers, CABx (para. 3.21), some local authority general agencies, CACs and HACs (para 3.51) have their own information sources to back up their advice giving. There seems at present to be little sharing of these resources. It is interesting that although NACAB does now sell (at £200 per year) its information service to outside organisations, no Scottish organisation has yet availed itself of this service.

4.22 We propose that there should be more systematic sharing of information resources between agencies. Many advice agencies are developing information services which cover between them a wide variety of topics. We urge that these various information banks should be shared as appropriate amongst agencies. In particular the way in which CAB information can be shared on an agency basis deserves examination.

4.23 INDEPENDENCE

Consumers should have the option to approach a non-official agency if they feel they do not want to discuss their problems, initially anyway, with officials. Members of a community should be encouraged and helped to help themselves rather than rely on benevolent outsiders official or otherwise (3.41-42)
4.23/contd.
The use of volunteers means a considerably cheaper and no less reliable advice service if all the other requirements for efficiency are available. Camden Council of Social Service has calculated that its borough receives £24,000 per annum worth of additional expertise from the volunteers at six CABx. To put it briefly a good non-official agency is good value for money.

For all these reasons we propose that there should continue to be a mixture of official and non-official agencies in the advice network. Local volunteers should be encouraged in this service.

4.24
The question of finance for the advice network is firmly linked to the organisation of that network and it is to this question that we now turn.

4.25
FUTURE ORGANISATION OF SCOTTISH ADVICE SERVICES

The picture that has been presented in this report is a fragmented one: quality of advice is difficult to estimate; the balance between generalist and specialist is haphazard; the balance between official and non-official agencies follows no pattern or principles. It is of course not surprising that the picture is fragmented since there is no national or even local advice policy. A large number of bodies is involved; local authorities (both through their own advice agencies and through grants to other advice agencies), Central Government (through short-term grants to Consumer Advice Centres and through Urban Aid) and non-official agencies such as CABx and Shelter; but between all these bodies there is no general understanding of objectives or purpose. Despite fragmentation much valuable work has been done by the advice agencies, official and non-official, and by many local authorities at regional and district level. Advice is so desperately and universally needed that it is hardly possible for an advice bureau of any kind to open its doors without being able to point to worthwhile results in the form of help given. But is this good enough?

4.26
The importance we attach to the local advice network in times of economic crisis (para 1.6) leads us to conclude that the time is now ripe for a more purposeful approach to its development. We offer for discussion an outline scheme to support and monitor a developing advice service. We recognise that more money will be required to repair the gaps in the coverage of the existing network and that it is highly unlikely that in the near future local authorities will have additional resources to spend in this direction. No substantial progress therefore is likely unless Central Government makes available special grants to local authorities to enable them to increase expenditure on advice services. We believe that grants for this purpose are essential, particularly in times of economic hardship. The urgency of the situation is illustrated by the precarious position of many advice centres (para 3.40).

It is our view that what is needed is a system of general grants for advice as opposed to the usual short-term grants presently allocated for particular types of agency.

These general grants should be associated with a general supportive policy for advice services of all kinds. Advice services should be recognised as being as essentially a local authority responsibility as housing or education. We suggest that the Scottish Office is the most suitable department for defining the policy and disbursing grants for this purpose in Scotland.
4.27 We recognise that the likelihood of substantial grants in present economic circumstances is not good. It would appear to us, however, that consideration of the general policy for advice services could start forthwith so that a policy is formulated for a gradual extension of services throughout Scotland with fixed priorities and a considered balance between official and non-official services. The value to the community of voluntary services in purely financial terms should be taken into account. We propose that the Scottish Office should consult with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities on the pattern of advice services most suitable for various areas, against a background of approved minimum standards of advice.

4.28 The Scottish Office should be advised in drawing up such standards by a Consultative Committee composed of representatives of both central and local government as well as non-official agencies involved or closely interested in advice giving.

One responsibility of this Committee should be to identify subjects about which the public need more information and to advise the responsible departments on publication of suitable leaflets.

4.29 The local authorities in this scheme would remain the lynch-pin of the advice services, providing some agencies and funding others. They would have a general responsibility for building up an adequate advice network in their area. Obviously this would require a high degree of co-operation between local authority departments, but that should not be a basic problem. It would also be necessary to involve local non-official agencies providing or using advice services. To advise the local authority, therefore, there would be a local consultative committee mirroring the composition of the Scottish Office Consultative Committee. Fundamental to our ideas is that the local committee should include representatives of Community Councils, who must have a key role to play in securing adequate advice for their communities. These local committees should, in fact, be responsible for drawing up local plans for provision of information.

4.30 Finally the root question is which tier of local government should have the general responsibility for building up an adequate advice network? There are arguments to support either a District or a Regional role in this matter. On the one hand, all Regional Councils are involved at present in providing and/or grant-aiding advice agencies; consumer advice is specifically allocated to Regional Councils under the 1973 Local Government (Scotland) Act. All Regions, as against a few Districts, support CABx. On the other hand, most Districts (with important exceptions) are, by and large, involved at present either directly or indirectly in the provision of advice agencies. It might be argued that Districts provide a more manageable size on which to plan advice services than Regions, which are also much more heterogeneous in their urban/rural mix. Evidence that people look for advice within a small geographical range inclines us to the desirability of a smaller geographical administration unit. Again, Community Councils ought unquestionably to have an important influence on advice provision and they are organised on a District basis. We have not reached any final views on this issue which would seem a suitable one for COSLA discussion. But what is certain is that, however it may be decided, Regions and Districts must co-operate more fully than now in local advice provision if there is to be a reasonably accessible, high quality advice service adequate to meet public needs. Every advice bureau
knows that its clients are not concerned about administrative and organisational "frontier" lines. It is up to the providers of advice - official and non-official - to match the breadth of the problems presented to them by co-operating across the whole range of their clients' interests.
SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1. It should be a clear responsibility of all local authorities to ensure that trained sources of information and advice are available to the public. (4.2)

2. **Accessibility**
   The objective should be a pattern of advice services broadly based on the pattern of shopping centres. (4.2)

3. Plans for all specified areas of deprivation should include provision for advice services. (4.6)

4. In rural areas there should be experiments with alternative advice sources e.g. mobile services, freephones. (4.8)

5. Opening hours of advice agencies should match the working day, with provision for emergencies out of hours, particularly by telephone services. (4.10)

6. Paid organisers of advice agencies should be regarded as essential for their efficiency. (4.11)

7. A common logo should identify advice agencies throughout Scotland. This should be advertised by the Scottish Office, with television coverage. (4.13)

**Generalist and Specialist services**

8. Priority should be given to well spread generalist services having close co-operation with central specialist services. (4.15)

9. There should be emphasis on specialist 'clinics' in generalist agencies. (4.16)

10. Mobile services should provide general information. (4.17)

11. Legal advice centres should be situated in all areas of deprivation. (4.18)

**Quality of Advice**

12. Joint training for workers in advice agencies should be developed. There should be training centres in urban areas and peripatetic training teams for small centres and mobile units. (4.20)

13. The opportunities for more sharing of information resources between agencies should be considered in the co-operative spirit.

**Independence**

14. Both non-official and official agencies are necessary for a well balanced advice service. (4.23)

**Future Organisation**

15. The future development of an advice network depends upon the provision of general grants rather than specialist short-term grants. (4.26)
16. The Scottish Office should be responsible for drawing up an Advice Service plan for Scotland in consultation with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and a Consultative Committee representing central and local government interests and non-official agencies involved in advice services. (4.26 - 4.28)

17. The Central Advice Services Consultative Committee should be responsible for identifying public needs for advice and advising responsible departments on how to meet these, including suggestion for publications, advertising, etc. (4.28)

18. There should be Local committees corresponding to the Central Advice Services Committee but including Community Council representatives. (4.29)

19. There is an absolute necessity for close co-operation between Regional and District Councils in providing the services referred to at recommendation 1. It is for consideration where the ultimate responsibility should rest. (4.30)
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are very grateful to all those who assisted the Scottish Consumer Council in drawing up this report. In particular we wish to thank those who gave up their time to discuss aspects of the report with SCC staff.

Mr. John Wright
Mrs. Frances Allen
Mr. Andrew Currie
Miss Pat MacBryde
Mr. Jim McCallum
Mr. Peter Peacock

Scottish Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux

Mrs. A. Ward
Miss Bone
Mr. Roger Clarke
Mr. J. Bruce
Mr. R.L. Joyner
Mr. J. Gordon

Aberdeen C.A.B.
Glasgow - Bath Street, C.A.B.

Scottish Council of Social Service
Lothian Region, Dept. of Administration
Strathclyde Region, Public Relations Department
City of Aberdeen, Public Relations Department

The staff of Craigmillar Festival Society

The staff of Ferguslie Park Community Development Project

The staff of the Govan Community Advice Centre
Mr. K. Beaumont
Director, Grampian Region Consumer Protection Department

The Manager of the Grampian Region Consumer Advice Centre
Mr. T. Cairns
Director, Strathclyde Region Consumer Protection Department
Mr. J. Girdwood
Asst. Director - Strathclyde Region Consumer Protection Dept.

The Managers of the Strathclyde Region Consumer Advice Centres.
Ms. Brenda Clark
Edinburgh C.A.B.'s CAC
Mr. S. Smith
Dundee District Housing Advice Centre
Mrs. Fisher
Renfrew District HAC
Mr. Cumming
Edinburgh District HAC
Mr. John Smythe,
Shelter
Ms. Barker
Edinburgh Shelter HAC
It is impossible to list all departmental Directors who were good enough to send detailed replies and commentaries on our questionnaires. These were invaluable and we hope they will take this report as their acknowledgment.
### APPENDIX 3

**Advice Agencies in the 45 deprivation areas designated by Strathclyde Regional Council, October 13th 1976**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Agency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackhill</td>
<td>Legal Advice Clinic</td>
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<td>Greater Possil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ferguslie Park</td>
<td>CDP Information Centre</td>
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<td>Strone/Mankinhill</td>
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<td>Gibshill</td>
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<td>North Forgewood</td>
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<td>Craigneuk</td>
<td>Community Information Office</td>
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<td>Springburn &amp; Petershill</td>
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<td>Garthamlock</td>
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<td>Priesthill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridgeton/Dalmarnock</td>
<td>Dalmarnock CAB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Govan/Kinning Park</td>
<td>Community Advice Centre</td>
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<td>Easterhouse</td>
<td>CAB</td>
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<td>Drumchapel</td>
<td>C AB</td>
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<td>Cambuslang</td>
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<td>Greenend/Sightside (Coatbridge)</td>
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<td>Onthank (Kilmarnock)</td>
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<td>Yoker (Langhope Street)</td>
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<td>Darnley</td>
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<td>Donhill/Ladyton</td>
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<td>Port Dundas</td>
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<td>Wester Carnntyne</td>
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<td>North Kelvinside/Ruchill</td>
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<td>Parkhead/Springfield Road</td>
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<td>Maryhill</td>
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<td>Viewpark</td>
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<td>Woodside/Queens Cross</td>
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<td>Bruchill (Dumbarton)</td>
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<td>Renton</td>
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<td>Carnwadric</td>
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<td>Govanhill</td>
<td>Community Advice Assistance Centre</td>
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<td>Sighthill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blantyre</td>
<td>Advice and Information Desk</td>
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<td>Lower Vow (Greenock)</td>
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<td>Harwood Road, Johnstone</td>
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<td>Larchfield (Greenock)</td>
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<td>Faifley</td>
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<td>Halfway (Cambuslang)</td>
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<td>Laughtonchall (Hamilton)</td>
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<td>Ardeer (Stevenston)</td>
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<td>Crosshill (Barrhead)</td>
<td>CAB</td>
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