

# **Our impact and social value in Derbyshire Dales 2020/21**

**“Thank you so much  
for your help...  
now I can start to get  
my life back on track.”**



**Derbyshire  
Districts**

## Welcome and introduction

This year has been vastly different from previous years for everyone, including our community and our organisation. Due to the global pandemic, we have now operated for over a year under lockdown and containment conditions. For us this meant moving our entire operation to a telephone based model, closing all of our face to face service and transitioning our staff to home working. Recognising that the pandemic would affect everybody in many different ways, we wanted to ensure that as an organisation we remained open and available to support our clients with the problems they faced.

Despite fundamental changes to our operation services remained open every day throughout the pandemic and we deployed additional resources to our telephones to try to manage the demand. As a result we helped 1,401 people with 10,810 issues navigate a suddenly more complex world. The pandemic brought about fundamental changes within our community and we found that a substantial number of our clients were first time users of the service, having never needed us before. Complexities around furlough and employment issues meant that this area of enquiries rose along with enquiries relating to welfare benefits, in particular first-time claimants of Universal Credit.

Despite facing significant challenges, we managed to keep all of our specialist projects operating, paying particular attention to those that target the most isolated and vulnerable such as Building Better Opportunities and our Older People's Project.

A bid to the National Lottery Community fund enabled us to buy vital software and equipment to implement "virtual" advice by video link enabling us to address the barriers more vulnerable clients were facing with accessing the service via telephone only. This service enabled us to open the doors to clients in a safe socially distanced way and deliver our service to a wider audience.

Our team of dedicated staff and volunteers have ensured that we deliver a high-quality and responsive service across Ashbourne, Bakewell, Darley Dale, Matlock, Wirksworth, Winster and Youlgreave locations. We are also grateful to our funders, who continue to ensure that we maintain our services and meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in Derbyshire Dales.

**Chief Officer: Chloe Doxey**

## Our work in Derbyshire Dales

**£2.6 million  
secured in  
benefits and  
grants**

**10,810  
problems  
tackled**

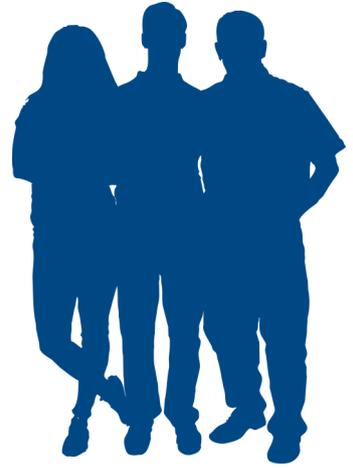
**1,401  
people  
helped**

**£1 million  
debt  
rescheduled or  
written off**

# Our clients...

Citizens Advice clients are almost five times more likely to live in poverty than the average member of the UK population.

Our work in Derbyshire Dales serves some of the most socially and geographically isolated wards in Derbyshire. Many people seeking our help face challenges to their physical health and mental wellbeing which are making everyday life hard.



## Clients by gender

63% Female

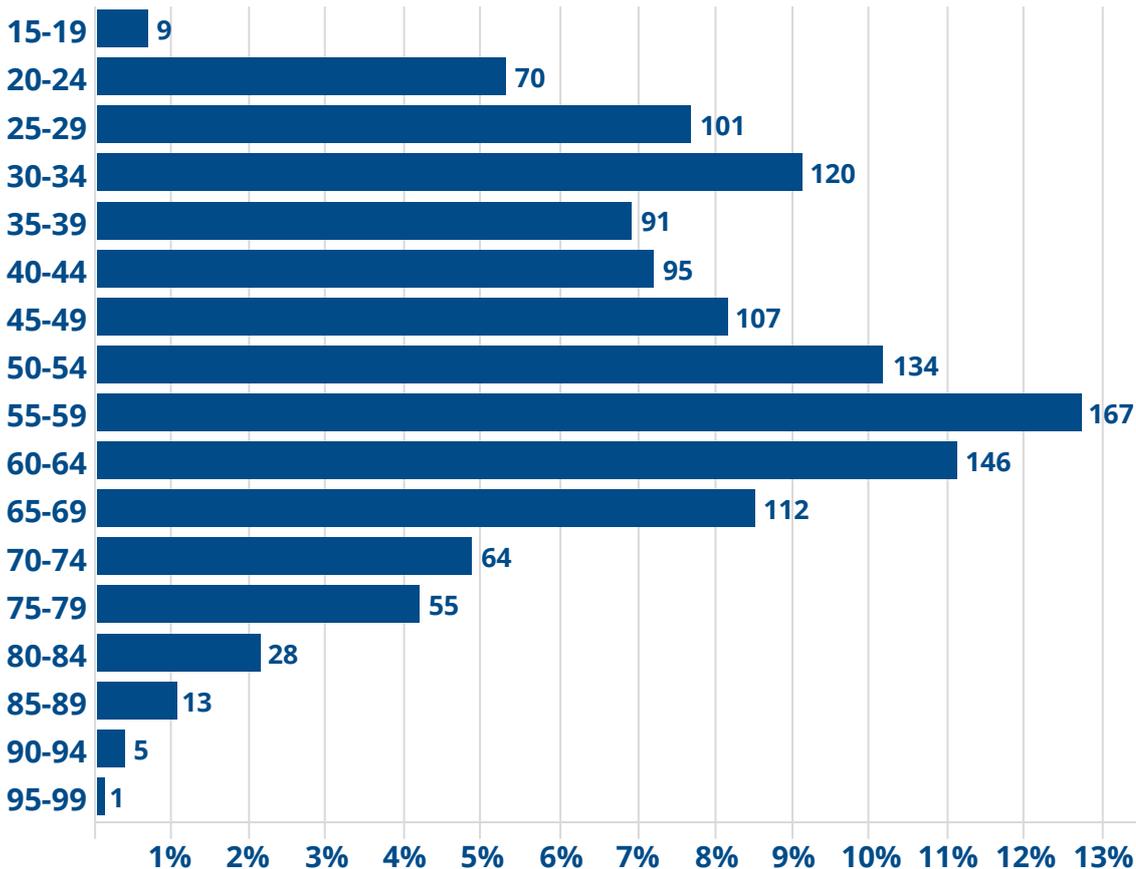
37% Male

50% of people we have helped in Derbyshire Dales have a disability or long-term health condition.

31% of people with a disability or long term health condition disclosed having mental health issues.

"The whole experience has been very good, no matter who you see, all the staff are willing to listen and help as best they can. As for me; it was help filling out forms. I also found out I was entitled to a little more each week, which I wouldn't have known about otherwise"

## Clients by age



# Derbyshire Dales in detail...

## In the last year we have:

Dealt with  
**5,430**  
enquiries  
relating to  
Benefits, Tax  
Credits and UC

Handled  
**625**  
queries about  
limited  
capability to  
work

Tackled over  
**251**  
issues relating  
to Council Tax  
arrears

Helped with  
**1,091**  
PIP related  
issues

Earnie initially contacted us for assistance with a complaint about a local opticians. We were able to assist Earnie with contacting our specialist Consumer Service to resolve the issue.

During the conversation it was established that Earnie had health issues which included arthritis and peripheral neuropathy and he had a blue badge. The adviser asked if he received any disability benefits and he said not. They were advised on eligibility for Attendance Allowance and meeting the criteria, Earnie said he would like to claim. We called the AA helpline and arranged for a form to be sent.

When it was received, the adviser helped Earnie to complete it using an online PDF version which was then printed and posted to Earnie for him to check, sign and post. The adviser said they would call the client in 6 weeks to see how the claim was progressing.

After 6 weeks the adviser followed up the claim progress and Earnie had been awarded the high rate of AA and had already had a backdated lump sum paid into his bank account. With his consent we also signed Earnie up to his electricity suppliers free priority services register.

Earnie was extremely grateful that he had received consistent and ongoing advice from the same adviser and said he wouldn't have considered claiming AA without our support. The extra £89.15pw will now mean Earnie can pay for a cleaner and a gardener. Earnie's initial contact with Citizens Advice about his spectacles had actually proven to be quite fortuitous for him and he said if he ever needs any help in the future he knows who to call.

### Financial outcomes

**AA Higher rate: £89.15/week**

**Total annual income increase: £4,635.80**



**62** people came to us  
for advice about  
divorce and separation



We helped **71** people  
to address their rent  
arrears



**126** people needed  
our help to access  
community care



Ward	People helped	%
Matlock St Giles	204	15%
Matlock All Saints	138	10%
Darley Dale	124	9%
Wirksworth	117	8%
Bakewell	103	7%
Ashbourne South	95	7%
Ashbourne North	71	5%
Masson	59	4%
Hathersage and Eyam	49	3%
Bradwell	45	3%
Tideswell	39	3%
Winster and South Darley	32	2%
Dovedale and Parwich	31	2%
Doveridge and Sudbury	31	2%
Lathkill and Bradford	31	2%
Calver	30	2%
Hartington and Taddington	30	2%
Stanton	28	2%
Litton and Longstone	25	2%
Clifton and Bradley	23	2%
Chatsworth	22	2%
Brailsford	21	1%
Carsington Water	21	1%
Hulland	17	1%
Norbury	15	1%

Through our energy projects we have provided over 1,000 energy savings tips on things such as turning off appliances, part filling kettles, insulating doors and using LED light bulbs.

Total estimated **savings** for our clients as a result of **energy saving tips** last year was more than **£32,507**.



Ward	Issues tackled	%
Matlock St Giles	2052	19%
Darley Dale	1131	11%
Matlock All Saints	1123	10%
Ashbourne South	777	7%
Wirksworth	744	7%
Bakewell	689	6%
Ashbourne North	566	5%
Masson	511	5%
Tideswell	313	3%
Doveridge and Sudbury	271	3%
Dovedale and Parwich	262	2%
Hathersage and Eyam	260	2%
Bradwell	249	2%
Calver	229	2%
Chatsworth	227	2%
Litton and Longstone	215	2%
Winster and South Darley	174	2%
Hartington and Taddington	165	2%
Carsington Water	159	2%
Lathkill and Bradford	157	1%
Stanton	149	1%
Clifton and Bradley	132	1%
Brailsford	106	1%
Hulland	81	1%
Norbury	68	1%



## Our advice...

There are many reasons why people turn to our service. Often concerned about one issue, such as housing, this may well be linked to other issues such as debt, benefit, financial capability and/or employment issues. We take a holistic approach to advice, ensuring every client leaves our service empowered and ready to tackle their issues.

	Issues
Benefits & Tax Credits	3,591
Benefits Universal Credit	1,839
Consumer Goods & Services	175
Debt	2,153
Discrimination & Hate & GVA	38
Education	14
Employment	564
Financial Services & Capability	634
Health & Community Care	194
Housing	379
Immigration & Asylum	12
Legal	116
Other	142
Relationships & Family	222
Tax	61
Travel & Transport	71
Utilities & Communications	605
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10,810</b>

### Benefits, Tax Credits and Universal Credit

Benefits relating to health conditions and disabilities such as Personal Independence Payment and Employment and Support Allowance/UC Limited Capability for Work continue to be a significant area where advice is required. People with long term health conditions or disabilities are needing help in making and managing a claim or are seeking advice on challenging decisions. By being able to offer timely advice and practical help navigating paperwork, and online claims we are ensuring that vulnerable people are not left without financial support at times of need.

### Debt

This is our second largest area of advice, with Council Tax arrears accounting for the highest number of debt enquiries. In fact, there were double the amount of enquiries relating to Council Tax arrears when compared to any other area of debt advice we provide.

Non payment of Council Tax can be a key indicator of long term debt. By identifying and tackling this early we may also be able to prevent other crisis situations developing - particularly through our budgeting advice and income maximisation.

# The difference we make...

Piotr contacted our Adviceline as he was having problems with his neighbour who was leaving rubbish in a shared hallway and blocking his access to his flat. Piotr explained that the neighbour was a private tenant, that he had tried to talk to the neighbour, but the situation had not improved. The Adviser discussed with Piotr the steps he could take to resolve the problem, including that the landlord or landlady could take action against the tenant if they were causing nuisance. Piotr had a business address for the landlord and decided to write to him.

The Adviser also carried out a full benefit check with Piotr, who worked and had a child. Piotr explained that his son had additional needs as he had been diagnosed with autism. Piotr had recently applied for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for his son, but it had been refused. Piotr explained that he had challenged the decision by requesting a mandatory reconsideration, but this had also been refused. Piotr said he completed the DLA form himself but as English is not his first language, he did not understand some of the questions and believed the form was asking for his son's physical difficulties only.

The Adviser spent time discussing with Piotr all the extra support his son needed, particularly with his communication and at school. The Adviser explained that DLA was not only for children who have additional physical needs, but also children who may need help communicating, playing with others, and keeping safe. Piotr explained that his son felt frustrated at times and would sometimes get angry and run off, particularly on the way to and from school. With Piotr, the Adviser completed a verbal diary of his son's day and the help Piotr and the school provided. The Adviser helped Piotr to approach the school for a report explaining what extra support his son had at school. The Adviser then completed an appeal on behalf of Piotr, giving extensive grounds of the additional emotional help which Piotr's son needed. The Adviser included the report from school and a report from his son's Educational Psychologist. Piotr told the Adviser he was not able to explain such detail in the form himself and appreciated the time taken for the Adviser to discuss his son's needs in depth, so he could get across to the DWP all his son's needs.

After 3 weeks of submitting the appeal form a different decision maker awarded middle rate daily living and low rate mobility components of DLA. This was done without the need for an appeal hearing. As a result of the DLA award, Piotr also received an additional amount with his Working Tax Credits.

Separately, the landlord visited the tenant and spoke with Piotr to resolve the situation. The tenant then stopped leaving rubbish in the hallway and the landlord made regular checks for this. Piotr was satisfied with this outcome.

Piotr stated that he had telephoned the Adviceline for help with the neighbour issue and thought he would just be given a number to call someone. As the Adviser explored the situation beyond the initial enquiry, Piotr was helped to get the correct benefits for his son, which he had not been able to do alone.



## Financial outcomes

<b>DLA daily living:</b>	<b>£59.70/week</b>
<b>DLA mobility:</b>	<b>£23.60/week</b>
<b>Extra Working Tax Credits:</b>	<b>£65.67/week</b>
<b>Total annual income increase:</b>	<b>£7,746.44</b>

## Our impact...

Our **community outreach service** is particularly focussed on tackling the root cause of problems **before** they develop into health and crisis issues.

We usually deliver advice sessions in most of the **GP surgeries** across Derbyshire Districts. Across such a rural patch this allows us to reach many socially and geographically isolated clients that we otherwise would be unable to help in a face to face setting. Due to the pandemic, this year we have provided a successful **telephone appointment model**, with many of our clients still being referred to us by health professionals and the wider health community.

The Derbyshire model is championed at a national level by Citizens Advice and has been recognised as good practice within the health management sector.

For every  
**£1**  
of funding  
our clients benefit by  
**£20.37**



For every **£1** invested in our charity it brings **£2.02** savings to the local authority.

Our clients are needing the skills of our specialist **Money Advice** team more and more. People in debt are twice as likely to have a mental health condition. Access to free, confidential and impartial debt advice has a direct and often immediate impact on an individual's financial situation as well as their wider health and mental wellbeing. **Our aim is to....**

let people make sense of their money and budgeting...



moving people out of debt and providing security

build resilient communities...



helping people stay in their homes, manage debt and keep families together

provide access to the right benefits and support...



helping to reduce sickness and stress, keeping people working

help people be 'work ready'...



our volunteering programmes provide skills and confidence

## Older Persons Project...

This year we have developed and expanded our older persons champion project, working across our 4 districts in Derbyshire offering telephone advice appointments. Building referral pathways with other organisations such as the Alzheimer's Society, social prescribers and adult services has been key to making the project a success.

In total we have helped **458** clients with 624 cases to gain **£1,051,571** in unclaimed benefits, giving them a total average income gain **per client of £2,295** per year. The enquiries have mostly involved benefits such as Attendance Allowance and Pension Credit, but have also encompassed travel and transport issues, health and community care as well as utilities and communication issues.



## Energy Advice...



We offer a range of energy related projects, including local one to one advice, a partnership with Western Power Distribution to provide advice to vulnerable people on their priority services register and a regional energy lead project where we provide training and information to front line workers.

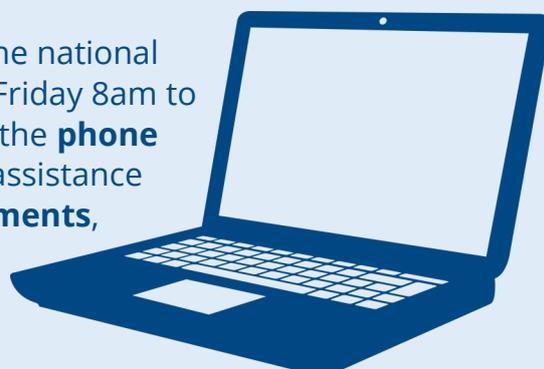
We cover everything energy related including: switching supplier, how to use a smart meter, accessing emergency credit, how to insulate your home, how to access schemes and grants, energy savings tips and much more.

In total through our energy projects we have assisted **over 1,000 clients** to save **£750,000** in total. We assisted 292 people in claiming £40,880 through the warm home discount scheme and the average saving per client for switching energy supplier was £242.

## Help to Claim...

Since November 2018 Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts has been involved in delivering the DWP funded 'Help to Claim' project, designed to assist anybody who needs **help to apply** for Universal Credit.

During the pandemic we have delivered the project as part of the national Citizens Advice Help to Claim Adviceline, accessible Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm. Our help is tailored to the individual and is available over the **phone** and online through **webchat**. The advice we provide includes; assistance with the online **application form**, help to access **advance payments**, help with providing **evidence** such as childcare costs or **ID documents**, three way **calls with the DWP** and checking that the correct **payments** are received.



## The value of volunteering...

Our volunteers are central to our success. Without them Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts couldn't be the force for change that it is. Their dedication enables us to provide such a comprehensive advice service as well as our responsive campaigns and social policy work.

In Derbyshire Dales many of our volunteers have continued to work remotely from home contributing to the success of our organisation in an unprecedented year.

But the value and benefits of volunteering aren't just limited to the charity and the community - our volunteers tell us they benefit too! Increased companionship, work ready skills, a sense of purpose, combating loneliness, developing local links and embracing new technology are just some of the reasons why people volunteer with us.



## Virtual Advice...

This year we have trialled a virtual advice service in our Matlock, Ilkeston and Buxton offices. The purpose of the project was to provide a covid secure service that replicated our usual face to face services. Our clients attend our offices as they usually would, but instead of sitting face to face with an adviser they are greeted by an adviser on a video screen. The appointment then takes place in the same way as face to face services would. This model has allowed us to help those clients who

would otherwise have struggled to access us via our Adviceline.

Over 20 volunteers have given their time during the pandemic to ensure our virtual advice service was a success.

## Adviceline...

Our **Adviceline** is a vital facility which we have expanded and strengthened over the last year, to a position where we now answer over **13,500 calls per year** across Derbyshire Districts. During the pandemic our Adviceline has been a lifeline to many vulnerable and disadvantaged clients.

This flexible, immediate service is usually the first point of call for our clients - particularly used by those people unable to leave home easily due to ill health, caring commitments, working hours or isolated rural locations.

The service is staffed by staff and volunteers, who during the last year have been working remotely from home to continue to deliver the service to our clients.

Our **Adviceline** is open from **9.00am - 4.00pm Monday to Friday.**

**Freephone:**

**0808 278 7954**



**Thank You!  
to everyone  
helping us help  
our  
communities**

**We are a charity for our local community, giving free, confidential, independent and impartial advice to everyone living and working in Derbyshire Dales.**

**We are extremely grateful to our funders, partners and stakeholders whose generosity and support enables us to deliver our much needed services.**

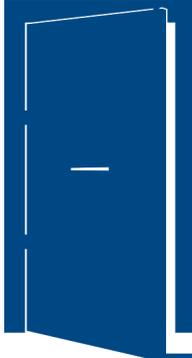
**Derbyshire Dales District Council  
Derbyshire County Council  
Derbyshire Public Health Locality Partnership**

**We couldn't continue to do what we do without you.  
Thank you.**



**Chloe Doxey, Chief Officer**

**On behalf of everyone at Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts**



## An open door on the high street

We provide weekday appointments and drop-in sessions at our Derbyshire Dales advice centre

**Matlock:** Town Hall, Bank Road, Matlock DE4 3NN

### Access to advice wherever you are in Derbyshire Dales...

Our telephone adviceline is a first response service for the whole of Derbyshire Dales and wider Derbyshire Districts area.

Open 9.00am - 4.00pm, Monday-Friday.

**FREEPHONE**  
**0808 278 7954**



### Help and support in the heart of your community



Our **outreach advice service** is one of the largest and most comprehensive in the country with more than 80 outreach locations across Derbyshire Districts.

In Derbyshire Dales we run **19** advice sessions a week in GP surgeries, and community facilities in...

**Ashbourne - Bakewell - Darley Dale - Matlock  
Wirksworth - Winster - Youlgreave**

Unless stated, please enquire at your local advice centre or call our adviceline for more information about our projects and services.



### Money Advice

We can advise you on long term debt options and explain how to deal with your creditors

### Older People's Champion

Advice and support on claiming benefits for residents over the age of 65



### Money Sorted in D2N2

We will help improve your skills, knowledge and confidence with different money issues so you are in a better position for the future



### Power Up in conjunction with

**WESTERN POWER DISTRIBUTION**



To ensure that vulnerable people receive impartial advice on energy, money, benefits and health

### Pension Wise

0808 146 7709 or [www.pensionwise.gov.uk/en](http://www.pensionwise.gov.uk/en)

Free and impartial government guidance about your defined contribution pension options



**Pension wise**



### Help to Claim

0800 144 8444

We can support you in the early stages of your Universal Credit claim, from the application, through to your first payment

**citizens  
advice**

**Derbyshire  
Districts**