

Derbyshire Dales Impact Report

April - September 2021



People accessing the Citizens Advice Service	746
Client contacts (appointments and sessions carried out with clients)	2,502
Clients' problems tackled	5,683

Age of clients

<25 yrs	4%
25-29 yrs	7%
30-34 yrs	8%
35-39 yrs	7%
40-44 yrs	7%
45-49 yrs	8%
50-54 yrs	11%
55-59 yrs	13%
60-64 yrs	13%
65+	22%

Gender of clients

Female	63%
Male	37%

Ethnicity of clients

White	98%
Asian, Mixed & Other	2%

Health of clients

Disabled or Long Term Health Condition	55%
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Benefits & Grants Secured	£881,956
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Debt Managed	£294,484
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Issues by type

Benefits & Tax Credits	1,945
Benefits Universal Credit	1,058
Consumer Goods & Services	88
Debt	1,086
Discrimination & Hate & GVA	11
Education	6
Employment	158
Financial Services & Capability	405
Health & Community Care	84
Housing	268
Immigration & Asylum	9
Legal	79
Other	75
Relationships & Family	112
Tax	28
Travel & Transport	61
Utilities & Communications	210
Grand Total	5,683

These past two quarters we...

 Assisted **103** clients make a claim for PIP

 Dealt with **1,058** issues surrounding Universal Credit

 Gave employment advice to **28** clients on pay & entitlements at work.

 Helped **26** clients with homelessness issues

 Dealt with **151** issues around fuel needs including customer complaints, tariffs and problems with supply

Case Study...

Krish contacted Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts as he needed help to complete a review form for his Personal Independence Payment claim. During the appointment we carried out a full benefits check, which included checking his rent and housing situation.

Krish stated that at the start of lockdown the radiator in his son's bedroom had leaked and he had reported it to his housing association landlord. The housing association carried out a temporary repair and stated a new radiator was needed. Krish explained that the leak happened again and caused damage to the bedroom and the water leaked into the room below. Krish had to turn off his heating as he was afraid the leak would get worse.

Krish reported the damage to the housing association. They visited and carried out a repair to the bedroom floor but did not replace the radiator as previously agreed. The surveyor stated that all the radiators in his home needed replacing. The maintenance team did not return and by now 12 months had passed and Krish was without a fully working heating system.

We explained that under s.11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, the landlord was responsible for repairing the heating system once they knew of the problem. Furthermore, those repairs should have been carried out within a 'reasonable' time. As the issue was on-going and Krish had re-reported the repairs needed, we explained that he could use the housing association's complaints policy to make a complaint and get the work done.

We wrote on Krish's behalf and explained the on-going effects of the lack of repair, the housing association immediately arranged for new boiler and radiators to be installed. The housing association accepted there was an unreasonable delay in carrying out the repairs therefore they offered compensation which Krish rejected as he did not feel it was adequate given the length of time taken and the inconvenience caused. Using the complaints procedure, we requested a Stage 2 Review of the offer on Krish's behalf.



The housing association increased the compensation offer. Krish was satisfied with this new amount and accepted it. Krish stated by Citizens Advice acting on his behalf, the repairs were carried out as promised and done much more quickly. Also, he received some money which he could use for re-decoration. Krish said he was glad that we looked beyond the presenting issue of the PIP renewal and explored other issues with him.

Case Study...

A married client claiming her state pension contacted Citizens Advice Derbyshire District after speaking to GVA helpline and local solicitors for general information regarding leaving her relationship as her husband was becoming increasingly abusive towards her.

She contacted us to ask how she would be able to manage financially if she left the marital home to live in rented accommodation and what benefits she may be entitled to. She had since secured a private rented property. We carried out a benefit check for her which showed she should get full housing and council tax reduction.

The housing and council tax applications were processed and much to our clients dismay she was told that she wasn't eligible for housing benefit due to the equity in the marital home. We empowered our client to send information from our reference source book CPAG stating that she should in fact be entitled to housing benefit due to her circumstances with having to flee the marital home due to domestic violence. We assisted her to write to her local authority with this information and her housing benefit was then re-assessed and awarded in full. This has to be reviewed in 26 weeks depending on our clients' circumstances and how her issues have progressed. She is fully aware that should she have further difficulties with this she can call us.

Due to her health conditions, it was suggested that she may wish to claim attendance allowance. We assisted our client in completing the form. This proved successful and she was awarded the high rate. This now meant that she was eligible for pension credit, and she was empowered to call the DWP and backdate her claim to the date the attendance allowance was awarded. She was also directed to apply for a blue badge online at Derbyshire County Council's website.



We have assisted our client to make and manage her benefit claims resulting in her having an increased ongoing income from attendance allowance, Pension credit and at least 26 weeks of housing benefit. This along with the security and peace of mind of moving into new accommodation away from her abusive husband - as well as knowing she can get help and advice from citizens advice to her full rights and responsibilities has meant our client is in a much better place financially and emotionally.

Outcome:

Attendance Allowance of £4,659.20 pa

Pension Credit of £3,369.60 pa

At least 26 weeks of housing benefit amounting to £2,444.00

Total income gained: £10,472.80 pa