

# Erewash Impact Report

## April - September 2021



<b>People accessing the Citizens Advice Service</b>	<b>1,277</b>
<b>Client contacts</b> (appointments and sessions carried out with clients)	<b>4,331</b>
<b>Clients' problems tackled</b>	<b>9,637</b>

### Age of clients

<25 yrs	8%
25-29 yrs	8%
30-34 yrs	12%
35-39 yrs	9%
40-44 yrs	7%
45-49 yrs	8%
50-54 yrs	9%
55-59 yrs	10%
60-64 yrs	10%
65+	19%

### Gender of clients

Female	60%
Male	40%

### Ethnicity of clients

White	95%
Black, Asian, Mixed & Other	5%

### Health of clients

Disabled or Long Term Health Condition	56%
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<b>Benefits &amp; Grants Secured</b>	<b>£1,958,619</b>
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<b>Debt Managed</b>	<b>£482,502</b>
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### Issues by type

Benefits & Tax Credits	3,033
Benefits Universal Credit	1,793
Consumer Goods & Services	138
Debt	2,090
Discrimination & Hate & GVA	24
Education	314
Employment	600
Financial Services & Capability	44
Health & Community Care	102
Housing	497
Immigration & Asylum	29
Legal	129
Other	138
Relationships & Family	274
Tax	42
Travel & Transport	66
Utilities & Communications	324
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9,637</b>

### These past two quarters we...

	Assisted <b>260</b> clients make and manage a claim for PIP
	Dealt with <b>1,793</b> issues surrounding Universal Credit
	Gave employment advice on <b>80</b> issues on dismissal and redundancy
	Helped <b>47</b> clients with homelessness issues
	Dealt with <b>247</b> issues around fuel needs including customer complaints, tariffs and problems with supply

## Case Study...

Shabnum is disabled living with a long-term health condition. She is also the main carer and appointee for her husband Eijaz. Eijaz has epilepsy. We had previously helped him make a successful claim for PIP and he was awarded the Enhanced rate for both the mobility and daily living components.

When he first became too ill to work, Eijaz had made a claim for Employment and Support Allowance. As he had been placed in the Work-related group, payments of ESA had stopped after one year.

Shabnum and her husband had then made a claim for Universal Credit. Eijaz had another work capability assessment and was again found to be capable of work-related activity. Our client had contacted the DWP in April 2021 via their online journal and stated that she did not agree with the decision about her partners capability for work and work-related activity.

It appeared that the DWP did not follow up the request made for reconsideration of their decision. Shabnum contacted Citizens Advice as she wanted to know whether there was anything else she could do to get the decision changed.

Our advisor explored with Shabnum how her husband's health condition affected his ability to carry out the type of tasks that may be expected in a workplace. Shabnum explained that as the tonic clonic seizures were very frequent, unexpected, and not treatable this had a significant impact on her husband's ability to work. He had also become very anxious and withdrawn and now wasn't able to leave the house without her. Her husband couldn't reliably communicate with others, travel by himself on public transport and needed to be closely watched when eating.

Our advisor assisted Shabnum to challenge this decision. Another note was added to their journal referring to their earlier request for reconsideration, asking that the Limited Capability for Work-related activity (LCWRA) was included when calculating their entitlement to Universal Credit. This time, their request for reconsideration was noted and after a three-month delay, they received a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice stating that the decision had not been changed.

Shabnum and her husband were disappointed but decided that they wanted to take the matter to Appeal. Our advisor assisted them to complete the appeal paperwork and made a referral to the Welfare Benefits Information and Advice Team.

Shabnum then received a letter from HM Courts & Tribunal Service stating that the matter had been passed back to the DWP. She heard shortly afterwards that a decision had been made that her husband was entitled to the LCWRA element, and the matter would not have to go to the full appeal hearing.

Both our clients were very pleased to hear this. The LCWRA element was then included in the calculation of their entitlement to Universal Credit increasing their monthly income. They also received a backdated payment representing the underpaid element that they were entitled to.

### Outcome:

Lump sum backdated payment received **£2,062**

**Increase:** In income **£343.63 pm**



## Case Study...

Our client had been living in the South of England. They were forced to leave their home on the recommendation of the Police due to a serious threat on their life. They left their Social Housing property and moved out of the area.

The client was rehoused in Erewash and came to us for help dealing with rent arrears and an overpayment of Housing Benefit from their previous address.

Due to the circumstances surrounding our client's move they were feeling a huge amount of stress. The outstanding rent arrears and overpayment of benefit were adding further pressure to an already difficult situation. Our client felt that they had been forced to sign a document giving up their rights to their home. They also stated that they had been informed that they wouldn't be given a travel warrant unless the paperwork was signed so felt compelled to do so.

Although relevant offices had been aware that they had quit the property, the former local Housing Benefit department had not been notified of our clients change in circumstances and the issues surrounding this sudden change. Housing Benefit had therefore continued to be paid resulting in an overpayment of benefit. This was then applied to the rent account increasing the amount of arrears that had already accrued.



Our client had a support worker and with their assistance they appealed the Housing Benefit overpayment. This appeal was unsuccessful prompting the client to seek our help and advice.

Our advisor helped the client challenge the overpayment and submit a complaint to the previous Local Authority regarding their lack of internal communication and the fact that the client's circumstances had not been taken into account or any consideration of these made.

Following our help and intervention the overpayment decision was overturned and the rent arrears were written off.

Our client was very happy with this outcome and extremely relieved that they would not be pursued for the arrears. This also helped ease their financial situation living on a limited benefit income and the mental stress they had been under.