



Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres

Annual Report 2015



Contents

Who are we?	2
The Chairman writes Graham Baxter	4
Your Voice Your Rights!	6-11
Our Funders	12
Statistics	13-15
Chesterfield	16-19
Bolsover	20-23
N.E. Derbyshire	24-25
Amber Valley	26-27
User Feedback Survey	28-29
Where to get advice?	30
Management Committee	31

Front cover: Colin Hampton, Cllr Steve Marshall-Clarke and Christina Crookes launch the Alfreton Max your Money Campaign cutting through the red tape!

Who are we?

Established in 1983, The Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres are part of a larger network of TUC Unemployed Workers Centres. We aim to prevent or relieve poverty amongst the unemployed, underemployed, unwaged and those in receipt of or entitled to benefits and credits, as well as other disadvantaged people in Derbyshire.

This year the Centre is going through the process of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. We now have 16 trustees which is a considerable reduction in the size of the previous Management Committee.

On behalf of all at the DUWCs I would like to thank all the retiring members of our Management Committee for their help and support over the years. They will of course, we are sure, maintain their close links with the Centres.



What we Provide

The Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres have gained a fine reputation for the services we provide. Our work is recognised locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. We provide advice, support and representation for all who come to us for help. However, we don't just wait for people to come to us, we proactively make our services known to the hardest to reach and most vulnerable within our communities.

Each year we deal with over 9000 enquiries at our Centres and outreach venues. We have recovered over £3 million in lump sum payments and increased weekly benefits for the people of Derbyshire. This money is vital both for the recipients but also for the regeneration of the local economy. Money gained is mostly spent locally helping to preserve jobs and aid local businesses.

Our services are provided by a few paid staff and a team of volunteers across Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire, Bolsover and Amber Valley. We have been successful in training volunteers from our communities many of who move on into employment.

Volunteers

This year, Jeanette Woodhouse has left us after finding employment and Lee Knight has taken a break from volunteering through illness.

The organisation relies heavily on volunteers and we are lucky to have such an enthusiastic and committed team. From advice work to leafletting, computer software development to stuffing envelopes, our volunteers take on such a wide range of tasks. Andy Parkes has continued to provide training and support to those volunteers helping with advice duties. David Eccles has been of tremendous help with the work around our change of organisational structure and with funding bids.



The Chairman writes

April 2015 saw the first year anniversary of the Centre's move to the new shared premises at 1 Rose Hill East in Chesterfield. The team have settled in well and all agree the new arrangements have proved beneficial to the staff, volunteers and those that use our services. Being close to the Law Centre has had considerable advantages, particularly for those facing problems that span the two organisations. People facing possible eviction need both legal advice and benefits advice in many cases. The arrangements now in place mean people receive a speedy response with no access difficulties.

The continued assault on parts of the welfare budget has put increasing strain on the services provided by the Centres. The support of the local authorities in the North East of the County as well as Derbyshire County Council are crucial to providing a lifeline to the many people caught in the middle of the continuing attack on the incomes of the low paid and those on benefits. The Councils have worked closely in partnership with the advice sector in order to provide the best possible

response to the issues that face our communities. We have met regularly and shared information and best practise. Together we can do our best to make sure that people do not lose out through not being able to access the help available.

The huge amount of money that the Centre's staff and volunteers help people to rightfully claim is a boost to the local economy. The Local Authority input helps secure grants from external bodies and so is, without a doubt, money well spent. However, money and statistics do not tell the full story. The help, support and representation show through the case studies in this Annual Report reflect the amazing personal commitment of the staff and volunteers at DUWC. Please take time to look through this report and let others know of the work of the organisation. It is here for all, whenever you may need it.

Graham Baxter



*Councillor Graham Baxter
MBE, Chairman of DUWCs
Management Committee*

The Co-ordinator writes

This year saw my 30th year as the Co-ordinator of the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres. I started work at a small port-a-kabin on Shepley's Yard in January 1985 towards the end of the Great Miner's strike. The circumstances facing the people coming through our doors are far worse than those of the 1980's. Reliance on Foodbanks, Benefit Sanctions on a massive scale, sick or disabled workers, without a hope of being employed, found 'fit for work' are some of the issues that our team of advisers have dealt with this year. The distress felt by many seeking our advice, support and representation is alarming. Policies which are supposed to be about helping people to move closer to the labour market are in many cases damaging to health, self defeating and at their very worst, causing deaths and contributing to suicides. We will continue to offer our services and expertise as well as giving voice to the concerns of those coming through our doors.

Pressure is mounting on our staff and volunteers. The workload continues to be heavy with welfare cuts biting deeply and leaving many people distressed and anxious. It appears there will not be any let up in the near future.

This year, we have been fortunate to have the assistance of a volunteer, Paul Kent, from Dronfield, who has transformed our case management systems by developing software to assist the advisers record all enquiries securely on the computer system. In October 2014 after training, we went live with the Case Management System that has proved both easy to use and of great benefit to both advisers and myself the Co-ordinator. The compiling of accurate statistics can now be done at the click of a computer. Details of enquiries and Appeals can be broken down to 'ward' level for the benefit of local councillors. Reports for projects can be far more easily compiled and our many filing cabinets have become obsolete.

Paul has provided one to one training with staff and volunteers and has maintained and improved the system over the year. He has single handedly brought the DUWCs into the 21st Century. His help was provided after receiving assistance with his own enquiry and he asked if he could give something back. He has certainly done that!



*Colin Hampton,
Co-ordinator of the
Derbyshire Unemployed
Workers' Centres*

Your Voice Your Rights!

Benefit Sanctions have again been a major issue at our advice surgeries throughout the year. However, we know we should be seeing more people with sanctions problems than we are.

The stopping of people's benefits, from the national statistics affects hundreds of thousands of claimants. Many people, though, do not know that they can challenge decisions, by taking them to tribunal. Since the introduction of the 'Mandatory Reconsideration' stage in the appeals process many think that they can take it no further. Others feel that if they challenge a decision it will be used against them later and will be detrimental to their future wellbeing.

DUWCs has dealt with four families where benefit refusals have led to deaths or have been a contributory factor in suicides. The families have stated that in their opinion the pressure that was put on their relative was the crucial factor in their demise. DUWC has made contact with

many people outside the jobcentres of Derbyshire reminding people to seek help, advice, and representation should they be threatened with a sanction or face weeks and months without benefit. We will continue to lobby for changes to a system that has been shown to do little to bring people closer to the labour market, but has forced many into destitution, desperation and in the worst cases—death!

DUWCs are contributing to a piece of research conducted by Financial Action and Advice Derbyshire. The aim of the research into Benefit Sanctions in Derbyshire to look into the following questions:

- Why are people being sanctioned?
- What is the impact of sanctions?
- What needs to change to reduce the number of sanctions?



Your Voice Your Rights!

Working together with a number of Derbyshire CABS, 46 local surveys completed to date.

Initial responses indicate reasons for sanctions being;

- 53% were told they weren't doing enough to look for work
- 39% did not do ALL the activities required
- 14% missed an appointment
- 4% failed to provide a sick note

Impact of sanctions – responses indicate the following;

- 43% still had financial difficulties 3 months after the sanction with 25% still having financial difficulties after 6 months
- 43% felt less physically healthy for more than three months following sanction
- 89% felt less positive about JCP staff
- 69% said the sanction affected their ability to look for work

Coping during sanctions

- 80% cut back spending on food
- 76% cut back spending on energy

It appears from this early analysis that Sanctions are not fulfilling their stated aim of bringing people closer to the Labour Market but they appear to be bringing great hardship to those affected.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A SANCTION

SEEK HELP Phone 01246 231441

ASK FOR A WRITTEN EXPLANATION

INFORM THE COUNCIL HOUSING BENEFIT OFFICE

APPLY FOR A HARDSHIP PAYMENT

CHALLENGE IT! You have one month to ask for a mandatory reconsideration of the decision.

If the decision is not overturned you can then

APPEAL AT AN INDEPENDENT TRIBUNAL

KEEP SIGNING ON Even though you are not getting paid



Your Voice Your Rights!

Welfare Charter

At a Conference in February a large delegation from DUWC's were able to have an important input into the development of the WELFARE CHARTER. The Charter, below, is a lobbying tool to be used to try and change the public narrative around welfare issues. The Charter was launched in September at the TUC and local MP's will be lobbied in the near future.

We should have...

1. A political commitment to full employment achieved with decent jobs

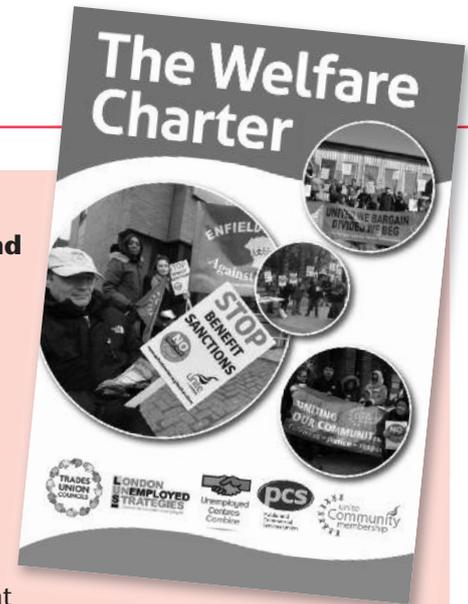
People are entitled to decent, stable and secure jobs that provide regular, guaranteed hours that allows them to also meet any caring responsibilities; not zero hours contracts in precarious jobs.

2. A wage you can live on for all and a social security system that works to end poverty

We need a National Living Wage that people can live on, not just survive on, that applies to all.

3. No work conscription - keep volunteering voluntary

Forcing people to work for free on pain of losing benefits is simply providing free labour to organisations that should be paying workers proper wages.



Your Voice Your Rights!

4. Representation for unemployed workers

Everyone should have access to an advocate to help them navigate the social security system and appeal adverse decisions.

5. Appoint an Ombudsman for claimants

A Claimants Ombudsman should be appointed to arbitrate on unresolved complaints, to ensure claimants are treated with respect and dignity.

6. Equality in the labour market and workplace; equality in access to benefits.

We need a labour market where structural inequalities are overturned and a benefit system that is accessible to people.

7. An end to the sanctions regime and current Work Capability Assessment - full maintenance for the unemployed and underemployed.

We need a non-means tested, non-discriminatory benefit payable to all, with housing costs met. This must be allied with the wide provision of low cost housing.

8. State provision of high quality information, advice and guidance on employment, training and careers

There must be a supportive and independent careers and job-broking service, not linked to conditionality or benefits, offering face to face advice.

If you would like to add your logo to support the Welfare Charter, or get involved in promoting it, please contact thewelfarecharter@gmail.com



Your Voice Your Rights!

Max your money

The DUWCs 'Max Your Money' roadshow rolls on. This year saw the Chesterfield campaign and the start of work in Amber Valley

Max your Money!
These are tough times - make sure you're not missing out whatever your circumstance... Working or not, sick or a carer, young or old...
GET ADVICE
Independent Advice Centres
1 Rose Hill East, Chesterfield
(Enter down the ramp on the right hand corner of the Town Hall)
Monday 20th April9.30am - 1pm
Tuesday 21st April9.30am - 1pm
Wednesday 22nd April9.30am - 1pm
Thursday 23rd April9.30am - 1pm, 5pm - 7pm
Friday 24th April9.30am - 1pm
FREE, independent and confidential advice
If you cannot make the times above, contact us:
Tel: 01246 231441
or Email: info@duwc.org.uk
Check it out or miss out!
DUWC
YOUR VOICE YOUR RIGHTS

centred on
**Alfreton and
Heanor.**

Our aim is to maximise peoples' benefit entitlements. The complexity of the benefits system is a barrier to claims as well as the fear of form filling and associated bureaucracy.

The Chesterfield campaigns were funded by Derbyshire County Council Public Health and the Amber Valley campaigns by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust.

The following number of enquiries were received as a result of our publicity and engagement.

<i>Rother</i>	40
<i>Staveley</i>	51
<i>Loundsley Green/Holmehall</i>	51
<i>New Whittington/Barrowhill</i>	74
<i>Old Whittington</i>	29
<i>St Helens</i>	35
<i>Alfreton</i>	116
<i>Heanor</i>	68

Your Voice Your Rights!

Partnership and collaborative work

The Centres relocation in Chesterfield to the Town Hall has brought us into close proximity of the Derbyshire Law Centre, Trade Union Safety Team and Links CVS. We continue to see the benefits with closer working relationships, joint leaflets, and partnership funding bids. Enquiries that need input from more than one organisation can be dealt with much more easily and efficiently.

Our partnership and collaborative work extends much wider than the confines of the Town Hall. The Pennies and Pounds Project, funded by Comic Relief, continues to provide money advice services to older people through outreach sessions. Our partners include Age Concern Chesterfield, Chesterfield and NED CABs, Chesterfield Credit Union as well as Derbyshire Law Centre.

Derbyshire County Council Public Health have not only backed our 'Max Your Money' campaigns but have supported our Appeals tribunal work. Chesterfield CAB and NED CAB have been able to refer cases to us.

These referrals have mostly been generated through their work in GPs surgeries and Children's Centres. The continued collaboration of the Derbyshire Advice agencies and community organisations is testimony to the tremendous support given to us by Local Authorities, Town and Parish Councils plus statutory authorities and funders.



Our Funders 2015

- Chesterfield Borough Council
- North East Derbyshire District Council
- Bolsover District Council
- Derbyshire County Council

Parish and Town Councils:

- Alfreton Town Council
- Brimington Parish Council
- Clay Cross Parish Council
- Clowne Parish Council
- Eckington Parish Council

- Grassmoor Parish Council
- Ault Hucknall Parish Council
- North Wingfield Parish Council
- Pinxton Parish Council
- Pleasley Parish Council
- Somercotes Parish Council
- Unstone Parish Council
- Warsop Parish Council
- Heanor & Loscoe Town
- Shirebrook Town

Grants and Donations

- Comic Relief
- Big Lottery
- Working Neighbourhood Fund (Chesterfield)
- Coalfields Regeneration Trust

Small Grants and Donations

- Anonymous Charitable Trusts
- Graysons Solicitors



CHESTERFIELD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

North East
Derbyshire
District Council



Bolsover
District Council



DERBYSHIRE
County Council
Improving life for local people

Statistics

Type of Appeal Oct 1st - Sept 30th 2015	Abandoned	Pending	Completed	Arrears Amount	Weekly Amount
Child Benefit	0	0	1	£0.00	£0.00
Disability Living Allowance	1	8	18	£30,248.90	£808.63
Housing Benefit	2	7	2	£244.74	£0.00
Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit	1	8	2	£1,575.00	£30.30
Other	0	1	0	£0.00	£0.00
Social Fund	0	4	0	£0.00	£0.00
Tax Credits	0	10	5	£5,880.00	£262.00
Attendance Allowance	1	0	5	£5,521.70	£136.75
Employment and Support Allowance	13	90	106	£116,500.54	£4,997.65
Income Support	0	2	2	£2,705.00	£0.00
Job Seekers Allowance	0	14	8	£1,359.90	£327.55
Pension Credit	0	4	5	£6,980.57	£0.00
Personal Independence Payment	4	85	57	£139,737.10	£4,728.88
TOTAL	22	233	211	£310,753.45	£11,291.76

As a result of these tribunals the following amounts were awarded:

Lump Sum Arrears: £310,753 Ongoing Weekly Benefits p.a.: £587,172

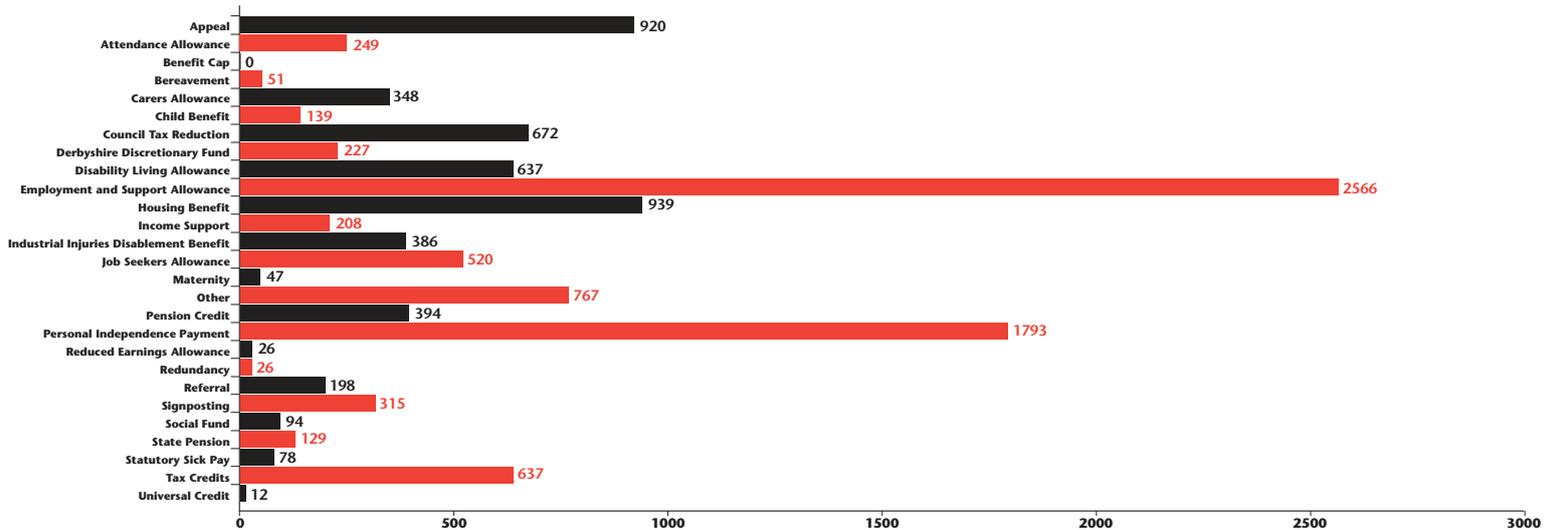
Over a year general enquiries at the Centres and Outreach Offices (as well as by home visits) resulted in payments amounting to £2,384,692 for Derbyshire residents.

During the last year this has meant a total of **£3,282,617** has been won through our advice and representation and at appeals.



Statistics

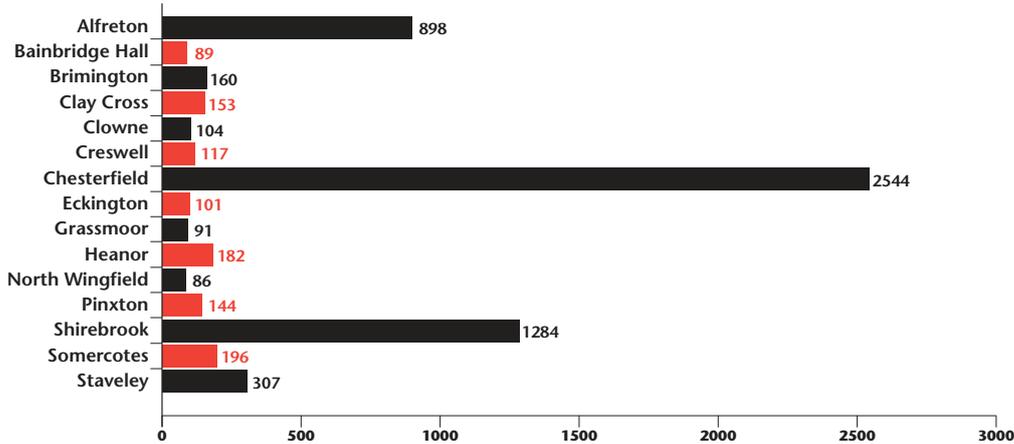
ENQUIRY TOTALS 2014/2015



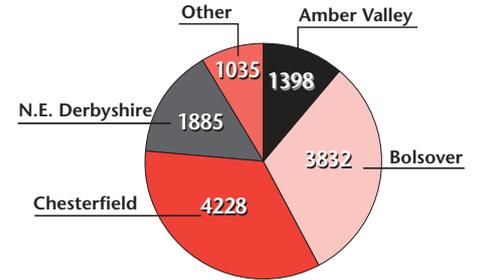
Statistics

VENUE CALLER TOTALS 2014/2015

Number of calls: 6456



ORIGIN OF ENQUIRIES



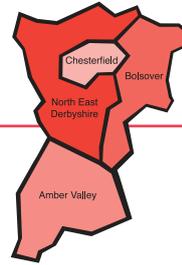
In Person 5577

Telephone Enquiries 789

Email Enquiries 146



Around the area - Chesterfield



Brimington Parish Council continue to give DUWCs unstinting support providing advice and representation

from the Community Centre on Monday mornings. At all venues we have dealt with 457 enquiries from Brimington residents throughout the year as well as representing 12 people at Appeals tribunals. In the new year we will be further focussing on Brimington with a Max your Money Campaign coming to the area.

In Staveley, our sessions in the library are popular. 20 people have received representation at Appeal Tribunal with 1041 enquiries received at all venues.

In the new year we hope to begin a new outreach in Hasland with the support of Grassland Hasmoor Big Local. This is expected to take place at Penmore Business Centre on Wednesday afternoons.

Thanks go to Dick Banker, Keith O'Neill, Brigit Long, Nicolo Ferrera, Paul Kent, Paula Taylor, Andrew Bradshaw, David Eccles, Nigel McIntyre, John Knight and Lee Knight – without their volunteering throughout Chesterfield and in the Headquarters at Rose Hill East we would not be able to provide the services in the Borough.

Case study

A claimant was referred to our service as a result of her son calling in to our take up campaign at Barrow Hill.

The claimant wanted to know if she was able to claim any council tax reduction: a benefit calculation was done. This resulted in pension credit entitlement made up of guarantee credit and savings credit also an amount for mortgage interest. This totalled £82.17 extra benefit per week. The claimant was also entitled to council tax reduction of £14.21 per week.

Around the area - Chesterfield

Case study

A man from Brimington came to our Community centre Outreach due to fuel poverty. He works part time, and claims some Housing Benefit.

His income is so low he cannot afford heating in his home. The irony is that, he is an ex coalminer but does not get a coal allowance. Our adviser was able to help him obtain a small discretionally Housing Benefit allowance to enable him to buy six months' worth of coal. I also put him in contact with a miner's welfare organisation that also allowed him £200 worth of coal. Additionally, they allowed him a week's holiday as he has not been able to afford one in 15 years.

A woman from Brimington came in with reference to her husband who is 78 and having problems with self-care. He has mobility issues and substantial care issues at home

following a stroke. We were able to advise that he makes a claim for Attendance Allowance and helped him complete the claim form. He was awarded £82.30 weekly and we recently completed a claim for Carers Allowance for his wife which may increase their income by a further £61 per week.

"I would like to say a very big thank you to you and your colleagues for getting me through my ESA Appeal, I couldn't have gone through it without your support!"

Keep up the good work, you make such a massive difference to peoples lives!"

Mrs A Chesterfield



Around the area - Chesterfield

Case study

A case was referred to us by the Chesterfield CAB. A man from Staveley had claimed Employment and Support Allowance but this was refused. He suffers from high anxiety levels and depression. He is also unable to go out of the home alone due to his illness.

Following the reconsideration process the man was awarded 6 points which was not enough to meet the threshold for an award of Employment and Support Allowance.

The man was interviewed, and was accompanied by his mother for support. It came to light that the DWP were not fully aware of his condition, and that he had been diagnosed with ADHD since he was 6 years old. This was raised by our representative at the Appeal, and consequently, he was placed in the Support Group.

This means that he does not have to undertake work related activity. This also increased his Employment and Support Allowance to £125.00 per week including the enhanced disability premium. He also had lump sum arrears of £1355.

We are currently helping him make a claim for Personal Independence Payment.

Case study

A Resident of Holmehall came to our Max your Money campaign.

She had claimed Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and had been turned down. Client had substantial disability's and we immediately requested a Mandatory Reconsideration. Unfortunately, but unsurprisingly DWP maintained she was not entitled to any rate of PIP. We

"Thanks so much, couldn't have done it all without you." Mrs S. Staveley

Around the area - Chesterfield

then took the case to tribunal and at this stage she was awarded PIP for three years and received £6500 arrears and over £400 a month continual for the duration of the award.

Case study

A claimant was referred to our service as a result of her son calling in to our take up campaign at Barrow Hill.

The claimant wanted to know if she was able to claim any council tax reduction: a benefit calculation was done. This resulted in pension credit entitlement made up of guarantee credit and savings credit also an amount for mortgage interest. This totalled £82.17 extra benefit per week. The claimant was also entitled to council tax reduction of £14.21 per week.

"Without the speedy intervention of DUWC, our daughter could have been in a destitute state for several weeks, we ourselves could not possibly have achieved such a speedy result. The staff at the DUWC are very approachable, in dealing with people in such vulnerable situations. The DUWC is relieving the pressure and finances of other organisations, who would eventually have to deal with a deterioration in the health of victims or in keeping them from living on the streets.

We people of Chesterfield are very grateful to the council in funding the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres and would like you to know that the vision on your part in doing this and your faith in the people who run it, is entirely justified."

Mr and Mrs H. Chesterfield



Around the area - Bolsover



It has been business as usual, with continued commitment and dedication by everyone to the cause of helping those in our community maximise their incomes through benefit entitlements, and providing a voice for their concerns and grievances.

Thanks again for the commitment of volunteers, Keith O' Neill, Alison Jarvis, Gill King, Shirley Pierson and Karen Seymour, who continue to work as a strong team, giving their time and expertise to help those seeking advice and guidance on all matters relating to the Welfare System. We welcome new volunteer Roy Whitehead.

Welfare changes and cuts continue to burden claimants around our area. As an organisation we have challenged the DWP over many issues including JSA 'claimant

commitment' and punitive unjust sanctions. The Bolsover District is an area that would not see the rollout of Universal Credit 'Gateway' until the winter of 2015. Our Advisers reported that from early on in 2015, Job Centre Advisers had been implementing Universal Credit 'claimant commitment rules; whereby claimants are forced to undertake job search for 35 hours a week, or risk facing a sanction. Essentially, their actions have raised issues around the legality of many past and current sanction decisions imposed on claimants; forcing many into hardship. We



Andy Parkes, adviser

Around the area - Bolsover

have taken up JSA sanction cases with DWP Partnership Managers and local MP's, giving voice to those on the receiving end of highly suspect decision making.

As we near the end of 2015 we look to the 23rd of November, the date that Universal Credit 'Gateway' is rolled out in the Bolsover District. We will have to work hard to advise and represent those who will be subjected to the harshest of conditionality regimes in order to receive benefits. The irony is that those in part time work could face the threat of sanctions just like those who are unemployed or sick. DUWC's will be in the forefront of efforts to reduce the threat of sanctions to those within our communities.

We will be focussing on the Scarcliffe and Blackwell Parishes in the coming months as part of our Max your Money campaigns funded by the Coalfields regeneration Trust.

Case study

A Shirebrook man came in to our Office on Patchwork Row with a speculative enquiry about possible Housing Benefit entitlement.

He had separated from his wife some months previously, but there had been reconciliation. He said that he had previously claimed as a single person and did so when he had been living with his wife. We asked him to return with his income details and any previous benefit assessments provided by his local Authority benefits section.

A little later he came back with his and his wife's incomes and assessment sheets showing previous entitlement to both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (as it was previously) We checked the joint income and discovered his wife was claiming Carer's



Around the area - Bolsover

Allowance but there was no Carer's Premium in the calculation. It was clear that the couple had not been receiving the correct amount of benefit for a long time. We made representations to the benefits section at Bolsover, who agreed that the man had been underpaid. A few weeks later he received £1,500 of underpaid benefit, which he was very glad to have as it paid off a very important debt and put his mind at ease.

Case study

We have recently helped a woman from Clowne facing two income reductions as a result of a tax credits overpayment decision.

The woman in question incurred an overpayment of tax credits which she reluctantly agreed to pay back. She set up an arrangement with HMRC Debt Recovery, to pay back monthly a figure of £100.00. She received confirmation by letter only to later discover that HMRC

Tax Credits had begun to recover the overpayment from her 2015/16 award; this was at least another £100.00 a month. This plunged her family into hardship; she has a disabled son she was receiving tax credits for. She tried to argue that their second recovery decision put her family in hardship. HMRC would not budge and continued to recover from her ongoing award.

We became involved and went through the complaints process at stage one and two. At first the Tax Credits Office agreed to suspend recovery from this year's award. A little time later they began to recover again. We took the process to stage two and the recovery was stopped with an apology and compensation received for the distress caused. The woman now has her full in-year entitlement. However HMRC are refusing to pay her back the money recovered; we have taken her complaint to the adjudicator and are waiting for an outcome.

Around the area - Bolsover

Former miner George Williams of Barlborough first accessed our service in Clowne in September 2014. We helped him with Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit ...and Reduced Earnings Allowance claims and with PIP, overturning the DWP's decision. His daughter brought in a £300 donation before he died and told us that he wanted any money collected at the funeral to go to the Centres. Andy Parkes attended his funeral on our behalf. We thank George and his family for their wonderful support.

Thank you all for your recent messages of love and support, and for the memories of George you have shared with us.

We would be pleased if you could send donations in memory of George to the Derby Unemployed Workers Centres 'One Fund for All'. This fund helped George challenge the Department of Work and Pensions when they made a wrong decision, they were very valuable to him and he held them in very high regard.

Donations can also be made to Ashgate Hospice, for the help and support they gave George during his illness.

You are welcome to join George's family at Mastin Moor Club, Renishaw Road, Mastin Moor, Chesterfield S43 3DW afterwards for light refreshments.

*In Loving Memory
of*

George Melvyn Williams

21st July 1949 - 18th October 2015
Barlborough Church
& Clowne Cemetery

Monday 26th October 2015
at 3pm



Around the area - North East Derbyshire



During the year we have represented at 45 Appeal Tribunals for people in North East Derbyshire District. Like everywhere else this is down on last year.

The dramatic showdown has been caused by the change of contractor for Work Capability

Assessments as well as the introduction of the Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) process in the Appeals procedure. However there is now a big increase in the number of Personal Independence Payment Appeals. DUWCs have done much work through the year to make people aware that they can appeal decisions made at the MR stage, as many people are abandoning the process at this stage because of a lack of access to advice.

The DUWCs continues to staff advice surgeries in Eckington, Clay Cross, Grassmoor and North Wingfield. Many people, of course, access our services at the Chesterfield HQ The legacy of last years Max your Money Campaign has seen an increase in enquiries in the N.E.Derbyshire area where we receive fantastic support from many Parish Councils.

"I would like to say thank you for being there for me. If you didn't attend the appeal I don't think I could have made it without your support."

Angie, Eckington

Around the area - North East Derbyshire

Case study

A young woman from Clay Cross was referred to us by North East Derbyshire CAB. She was suffering from Fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue Syndrome. She also has an eating disorder anorexia and depression.

The woman was initially awarded nil points and had chosen to have her award heard on papers.

After being referred to us we informed her that it is very important that she attend her Tribunal in person, with one of our representatives so that her case can be heard.

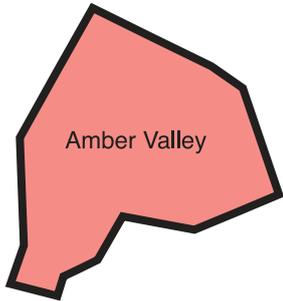
The woman was awarded further points for daily living, however, this was not enough to receive an award for daily living. The woman was awarded enhanced mobility, which means that she can have access to the Motability scheme if she wishes. This means a car, blue badge and road tax. The amount is an Extra £55.00 per week and also she received arrears of £800.

“Thank you for all your support during one of the most difficult times of my life.”

Mrs. H. Grassmoor



Around the area - Amber Valley



Max your money has come to Amber Valley this year with campaigns in Alfreton and Heanor. Although we receive no grant aid from the Borough Council, the Centres continue a presence in the area. This is thanks to the superb support we

receive from Alfreton Town Council, Somercotes Parish Council, Heanor and Loscoe Parish Council as well as Salcare in Heanor.

The Max your Money campaigns have given us the impetus to reach out to communities, informing them of the services of our organisations. Weeks after the campaigns we continue to receive requests for help, advice and representation as a result of the leaflets, posters and news reports.

Our Somercotes advice sessions on Monday afternoons at the Parish Hall have led to 12 Appeals tribunals being

heard with £19,714.29 awarded in lump sum arrears and £26,068 in annualised additional weekly payments.

We would be pleased to expand our work in the Amber Valley area but without further support this is impossible.



Launch of Heanor Max Your Money Campaign funded by Coalfields Regeneration Trust

Around the area - Amber Valley

Case study

Mr S from Alfreton came into our office for a benefit check and was told that because of his age he would be entitled to Pension Credit.

He was initially told by the Pension Service that he would be entitled to the benefit. He then returned with a letter stating that because of income/savings he would not be entitled. We checked the calculation they had used and it showed that they had put the amount of his monthly private pension as a weekly total thus stopping him from receiving payments. We informed them of the error and payments were put into place

Case study

Mrs L from Somercotes had been placed in the Support Group for ESA following our representation.

A few weeks later she received a letter from A4E stating that she had to attend for a Work Focused Interview. She was warned that if she did not attend her benefit could be sanctioned. We rang the training provider and informed them that the Tribunal had decided that she had limited capability for work related activity which therefore placed her in the Support Group. We told them that this meant her attendance with them was voluntary.

"I attach a cheque in appreciation of all the help you gave, and supporting me through my ordeal, resulting in success, for which I am grateful and know it was only achievable with your help."

Miss C. Alfreton



User Feedback Survey 2015

114 people responded to our user feedback survey in September.

Details of how long individuals waited to see an adviser, broken down into five bands.

0 – 5 minutes	66
5 – 15 minutes	22
15 – 30 minutes	12
30 – 60 minutes	8
Over – 1 hour	6

Each individual was asked if they would use our service again. **114** said that they would. **100% positive**

Each individual was asked if they would recommend us to someone else who was in need of benefits advice.

113 said they would, just 1* (see below) said they would not, **99% + positive.**

The 1 person who said they would not recommend us said they would use us again and was **Very Happy and scored the visit/advice **Excellent.***

Below shows how people found out about our services.

From a relative or friend	43
Previous use of advice services	21
Local publicity	9
Council publications	9
Jobcentre Plus	8
Leaflet	7
Display sign	5
Member of Parliaments Office	2
Magistrates Court	1
Hospital	1
Age Concern	1
CAB	1
Web Site	1

*Amazingly there were **5** individuals who did not make any comment.*

Satisfaction Rates with the Service were as follows.

Very Happy - excellent service	104
Satisfied - staff have done their best	8
Dissatisfied - could do better	0
Very Unhappy - the service was poor	0
None of the above	0

User Feedback Survey 2015

Here are a selection of comments given

Very friendly and polite advisors.

Always prepared to go the extra mile.

Very useful advice and information given, helpful organisation.

*Very happy with the service and help received.
BRILLIANT!!*

The advisor was very helpful and seemed very knowledgeable about the subject we discussed. I feel the drop in service really works.

Keep up the brilliant work.

Organised, friendly and understanding.

Can recommend this office for help.

Been fantastic with me.

*Without you we would have nobody to turn to.
IT'S BRILL!!.*

Felt comfortable coming in here.

Good sound advice given.

Friendly and welcoming.

Fantastic Service.

Very approachable and helpful.

Advice was clear, wouldn't know what and where I was without this service.

Very good and helpful.



WHERE TO GET ADVICE

Chesterfield & North East Derbyshire

1 Rose Hill East, Chesterfield S40 1NU
Tel 01246 231441/Fax 01246 551529
Email: info@duwc.org.uk
Monday - Friday 9.30am - 1.00pm

BRIMINGTON - Community Centre, High Street
Monday 9.00am - 12 noon

CLAY CROSS - Adult Education Centre, Market Street
Monday 9.30am - 12.30pm

ECKINGTON - Business Centre, Market Street
Monday 1.30pm - 3.30pm

NORTH WINGFIELD - Community Resources Centre,
Whiteleas Ave
Thursday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

GRASSMOOR - Community Centre, New Street
Thursday 10.00 am - 12 noon

STAVELEY - Staveley Library
Mondays & Thursdays 9.30am - 12.30pm

Bolsover District

44 Patchwork Row, Shirebrook, NG20 8AL
Tel: 01623 748161 Fax: 01623 743316
Monday - Thursday 9.00am - 11.30am

BOLSOVER - Bainbridge Hall, Carr Vale
Monday 1.30pm - 4pm

CLOWNE - Mill Street,
Tuesday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

CRESWELL - Limestone House, Elmton Road,
Thursday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

PINXTON - Village Hall, Kirkstead Road,
Tuesday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

Amber Valley

Suite 4, Alfreton House, High Street, Tel: 01773 832237
Tuesday 9.00am - 12 noon
Wednesday/Thursday 9.00am - 12 noon/1.00pm - 4.00pm

HEANOR - Salcare, Ray Street,
Friday 8.30am - 12.30pm

SOMERCOTES - Parish Hall, Nottingham Road,
Monday 1.30pm - 4.00pm

Management Committee 2014/2015

The Management Committee would like to thank all those who have given freely of their time and talents throughout the year in pursuit of the aims and objectives of the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres.

Chair

Cllr Graham Baxter MBE
(N.E.Derbyshire District
Council)

Vice-Chair

John Knight

(Chesterfield & District
TUC)

Treasurer

Ian Rutledge (co-optee)

Chesterfield Borough Council

Councillor Amanda Serjeant

Derbyshire County Council

John Owen

Alfreton Town Council

Steve Marshall-Clark

Mary Kerry

Bolsover Town Council

Councillor Ann Syrett

Chesterfield & District Trades Union Council

Barry Johnson

Derbyshire Association of Trades Union Councils

Shay Boyle

Members

John Gilbert, Elaine Tidd,
Nicolo Ferrera, Angela
Webster, Keith O'Neill,
Caroline Randall, Hilary

Cave, Allison Jarvis, Karen
Seymour

Co-optees

Dave Marriott (PCS)

Reuben Redhead (ACCA)

Sarah Roy (Law Centre)

Centre Staff 2015

Colin Hampton
(Co-ordinator)

Andy Parkes (Assistant
Co-ordinator/Welfare
Rights Advisor)

Lynn Bagshaw
(Administrator)

Tim Wilkinson -
Welfare Rights

Katrina Hudson -
Welfare Rights

Glynn Power -
Welfare Rights

Justine Bark -
Welfare Rights

Paul Marklew -
Welfare Rights

Jane Marriott -
Welfare Rights

John Bradley -
Welfare Rights



Thanks

To all our funders, our Management Committee,
our OFFA Contributors and all our supporters.



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