



# Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres

Annual Report 2017



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*Front cover: Colin Hampton, Cllr Steve Marshall-Clarke and Christina Crookes giving out chocolate money to launch the Alfreton Max your Money Campaign.*

# Who are we?

**Established in 1983, Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres is 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.**

The organisation has now become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with 16 trustees drawn from the considerable wealth of support and expertise around the centres.

The founders of the organisation would be pleased that the organisation has maintained its aims and objectives, continuing the links with the communities it supports.

All the staff at the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres started off as volunteers. Commitment runs through the trustees, staff and volunteers. DUWC has been built by some legendary members of our local



communities and everyone realises that they have a duty to continue the vital work started back in the early 1980's.

## 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 12000 enquiries at our centres and outreach venues. We have recovered £4 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 paid employment.

## Volunteers

This year we have welcomed a number of new volunteers into the Centres. They have joined our team of volunteers Shirley Pierson, Allison Jarvis, Keith O'Neill, Dick Banker, John Jarvis and Will Nightingale.

Brigit Long and Karen Seymour joined the paid staff. John Power did too, becoming a Personal Navigator on the Building Better Opportunities Money sorted project.

The following people have begun training as advisers at the Centre – Linda Cantrill, James Pattison, Sue Wheatcroft, Barry Noakes, Georgia Durose, Maxine Smart and Callum Salfield.

Marta Jashot is working for us on a sessional basis with the Bilingual Buddies project. Marta will be working from our Shirebrook office supporting people for whom language problems are a barrier for accessing support in a crisis. Marta will be reaching out to those people in our community and encouraging them to use the service.

We are fortunate to have a fantastic team of volunteers. It is also very pleasing to see so many move into paid employment following their training and experiences within the organisation.

*Thank you.*

# The Chairman writes

**More and more people will be needing to access the services of the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centres this year with the big changes taking place to the benefits system.**

The roll out of the Universal Credit full digital service takes place throughout Derbyshire in the coming year. With any system change there are going to be many people requiring help and assistance. Early evidence is showing that the voluntary and community sector is going to be inundated with the 'fall out' from the changes. As well as people struggling with maintaining their claim 'on line', many vulnerable people could run into problems with 'sanctions', debts, rent arrears and possible evictions.

As well as offering support to those claiming, the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centres will be feeding back experiences to government, giving a voice to those trying to come to terms with the changes.

Our organisation is already under pressure with a 66% increase in Appeals Tribunals this year. Staff and volunteers are at full stretch supporting people challenging DWP decisions. Many of these cases end up in court.

This Annual Report outlines the work of the Centres and is testimony to the efforts of the staff and volunteers.

As well as advice the DUWC has been involved in research alongside Sheffield Hallam and Salford Universities. The research uncovered the stories of hidden exploitation of those in precarious employment. One million people are on zero hours contracts and the Jobcentre Plus offices insist on claimants signing up for Employment Agencies as a prerequisite to claiming benefits. The labour market from the point of view of the unemployed worker is not as buoyant or secure as some would have us believe. The Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres continues to both help, support, advise and represent claimants. All who work there started as volunteers. The commitment of staff and volunteers can be seen through the pages of this Annual Report. Long may our service continue.

**Graham Baxter**



*Councillor Graham Baxter  
MBE, Chairman of DUWC's  
Management Committee*

## The Co-ordinator writes

**The DUWC has now been open (with our own premises) for 34 years. Through the work of staff and volunteers, old and new, the Centres have built a reputation throughout the country for our work in advocating for those out of work claiming benefits and credits.**

It is often proposed by politicians and in the media that there is a group of people who are 'workless'. However, the reality is that most people are in and out of work, facing periods of unemployment, sickness or health problems. Our work increasingly deals with people in the world of benefits, credits and insecure employment.

I have been the Co-ordinator of the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centres for 32 of those 34 years and so can speak with authority on both the changes and similarities facing those using our services.

Having been told for years that work is the best route out of poverty, many with few or non transferable skills are finding that this is not necessarily the case. Anyone who stands outside the Jobcentre Plus offices and talks to

claimants will find many people in and out of insecure jobs. Most are desperate for full time employment but under the threat of sanctions, can only enter an employment market geared up for the interests of employers demanding flexibility. A hire and fire merry-go-round that leaves little room for personal development or planning for the future.



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

The Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centres have always lobbied for full employment with quality jobs and training. The biggest hurdle to improving the quality of employment is the coercion built into the benefits system. When the Jobcentre can be used as the recruiting sergeant for bad employers there is no incentive to raise standards. This coercion is now spreading to those who are in work with the roll out of Universal Credit. DUWC is going to have its work cut out in the near future helping people through the many challenges they will continue to face.

***Colin Hampton***

# Your Voice Your Rights!

## Agency Workers and Zero Hours - the story of hidden exploitation

**Following growing concern around the number of people presenting themselves at the Derbyshire Law Centre and DUWC, thrown into crisis by insecure jobs and fluctuating work patterns, we decided to conduct some research.**

Making links with Sheffield Hallam and Salford University we set about the task of producing both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the labour market in relation to Agency Work and Zero hours contracts. With a team of volunteers we interviewed over 30 people who had recent experience of these working conditions. Some people were afraid to talk as they were concerned that they might be identified and so hinder their chances of work.

However, all interviews were anonymised with a questionnaire put together by Professor Helen Richardson from Sheffield Hallam University. Helen interviewed the Agencies prepared to answer questions and analysed the interviews conducted by our volunteers. Daiga Kamerade-Hanta from Salford University did the number crunching and in July we were able to publish our report.

The recommendations include:

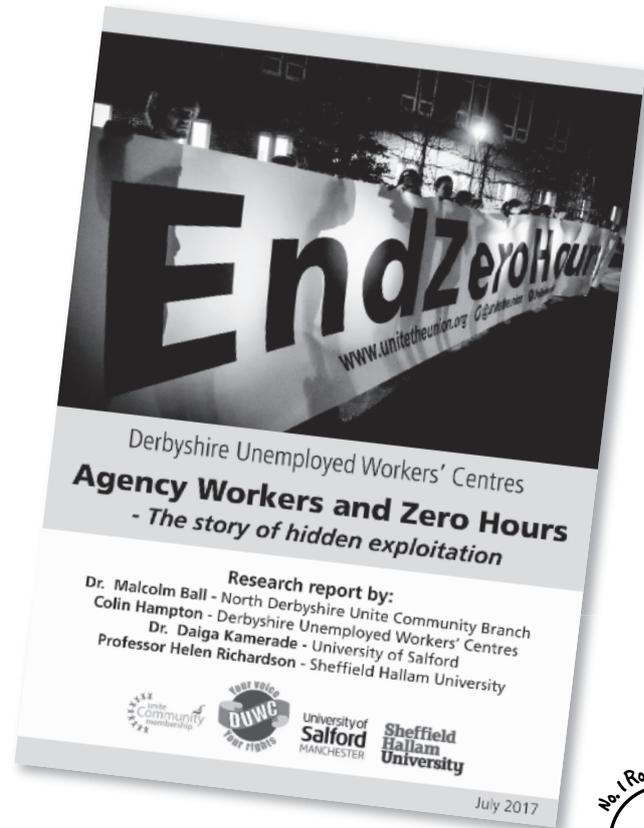
- Ban zero-hours contracts and end uncertainty around the number of hours working.
- The use of agency workers should be limited to the occasions that they are necessary and for short periods.
- End bogus self-employment.
- There should be compulsory collective bargaining for Agencies and for companies recruiting from abroad.



# Your Voice Your Rights!

- There should be from day one written statements setting out pay and conditions, including expected hours of work, for all workers.
- No-one should have to sign up to a temporary employment agency in order to claim benefits.
- End age discrimination in the National minimum wage.
- Abolish sanctions.
- Work should be safe and secure, including guaranteed hours. Workers should be able to expect stable hours or permanent contracts.
- Training, development and career opportunities should be provided.

***For a copy of the Research Report contact us at 01246 231441 or [info@duwc.org.uk](mailto:info@duwc.org.uk)***



# Your Voice Your Rights!

## Max Your Money

**DUWC devised a bespoke project for key areas of Ilkeston as part of the Derbyshire County Council Community Priority Programme.**

The programme operated in the first three months of 2017 with the follow up work and tribunal representations continuing through the year. The launch took place at the Scala Cinema in Ilkeston where 160 people attended a screening of the award winning film 'I Daniel Blake'. The actress Kate Rutter who played Ann, a jobcentre worker, in the film, answered questions from the audience at the end of the screening. The launch was covered in the Ilkeston Advertiser and Ilkeston Life newspapers. All 160 people took away information about the DUWC project.

Workers and volunteers liaised with Direct Help and Advice and Citizens Advice as well as the Foodbank and many community organisations. As a result the project

generated enquiries and Appeals tribunals.

The publicity for the project brought in people from surrounding areas. No-one was turned away.

It is hoped that the success of the project will enable the DUWC to attract external funding to support further work in the area.



*Launching the Project supporting people in Hard Times.*

# Your Voice Your Rights!



## Max Your MONEY



Free, independent and confidential advice

Help with:

- Benefits, Tax Credits and Universal Credit
- All benefit claim forms
- Representation at Appeal Tribunals

## Seek advice in Ilkeston, Cotmanhay and Kirk Hallam

Thousands of people across Derbyshire are not claiming what they are entitled to. Whether employed or unemployed, sick or a carer, old or young, single or with a family, get in touch to see if you can Max your Money. These are tough times, and there's nothing to lose by seeking advice, but there is much to gain.

Please find time to check whether you might be one of those missing out by ringing or emailing to make an appointment at a location most convenient to you.

Tel: 01246 231441  
or email: [info@duwc.org.uk](mailto:info@duwc.org.uk)  
See our website at [www.duwc.org.uk](http://www.duwc.org.uk)

Community Priorities Programme



# Your Voice Your Rights!

## Partnership and collaborative work

John Power has become our first Personal Navigator. We are now nearly a year into our project in partnership with a consortium built across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. The project is aimed at financially excluded people across the D2N2 area and is supported by the Big Lottery and European Social Fund. 'Money Sorted' offers a programme of person centred support and a range of bespoke interventions designed to enable people experiencing financial crisis and hardship, build confidence and improve their money management skills.

We are also working alongside a number of organisations providing a service to people whose first language is not English. Marta Jaskot is networking with the Polish Community to help provide a service from our Shirebrook Centre. This is part of the Derbyshire Bilingual Crisis Buddy Service.

## Personal Navigator - Case study

**During an outreach session in North Wingfield a woman came in with no money and no idea what had happened to her benefit claim. She had been diagnosed with severe mental health and her issues were wider than welfare rights. I explained that I was employed as a Personal Navigator who could help with issues around debt, housing and welfare rights. I arranged a home visit as she never opened letters so could not tell me what her current financial situation was.**

I established that her ESA claim had been suspended due to not responding to a letter asking to attend a medical. This had resulted in the suspension of Housing benefit and Council Tax Reduction. I opened a letter from the council advising that the process for repossession of the property had been started as her rent arrears were over £3000. Due to the serious

# Your Voice Your Rights!

nature of these issues I asked if she would like to join the project so I could take a more active role in trying to rectify her current situation.

I contacted the Law Centre to help stop the repossession order and spoke to the local council to explain the current situation. I helped her apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment in order to stop the rent arrears increasing. We completed a Housing Benefit form on the grounds of nil income which would restart her Council Tax Reduction. I contacted Severn Trent and asked them to install a water meter as she was paying a set rate which was estimated on a family consumption. The next stage was to contact DWP and challenge the decision to suspend her ESA claim as it had already been noted on her case file that she did not open mail. As part of a full benefit check I became aware that she was not claiming DLA or PIP. I helped her make a claim for her straight away in order to maximise her income.



As a result of working together we have been able to prevent eviction, reinstate Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction, reduce the water bill and write off £2500 rent and council tax arrears. We were also able to get her ESA claim reinstated and payments backdated for 9 months without the need for a tribunal. Additionally, the PIP claim was successful and she was awarded Enhanced rate for both components which led to her eligibility of a Severe Disability Premium. The overall result of working together has been to increase her income from nothing to £329.10 p/w (£8434.80 total back pay) and remove the threat of eviction.



**DARMOWE PORADY**

Martwisz się o pracę, mieszkanie, rodzinę? Chcesz rozmawiać z kimś w swoim ojczystym języku? Nie płac za poradę, przyjdź do nas ZA DARMO!

Dołącz do nas  
Mamy dwujęzycznych pomocników, którzy są przeszkoleni, by pomóc rozwiązać Twoje problemy poprzez pokierowanie do odpowiednich instytucji.

**DARMOWE PORADY**

- przepisów mieszkaniowych
- przepisów rodzinnych
- Zasiłków
- Zatrudnienia
- Zdrowia (np. zasiłek chorobowy)
- Ulg podatkowych

Przyjdź do nas na Dzień Otwarty, poznaj naszych dwujęzycznych pomocników i naszych pracowników z Twojej okolicy. Jesteśmy tutaj, by pomóc Tobie i Twojej rodzinie. Przez cały dzień wykwalifikowani specjaliści wraz z naszymi dwujęzycznymi wolontariuszami będą udzielać bezpłatnych, poufnych porad z wyżej wymienionego zakresu.

Poradzamy w zakresie:  
w każdą środę  
9am to 11.30am

Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centre  
44 Patchwork Row,  
Shirebrook,  
NG20 8AL



No. 1 Rose Hill East

# Our Funders 2017

## Local Authorities

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

## Parish and Town Councils

- Alfreton Town Council
- Ault Hucknall Parish Council
- Brimington Parish Council
- Clay Cross Parish Council
- Clowne Parish Council
- Eckington Parish Council
- Grassmoor Parish Council
- North Wingfield Parish Council
- Pinxton Parish Council
- Pleasley Parish Council
- Shirebrook Town Council
- Somercotes Town Council
- Staveley Town Council
- Unstone Parish Council
- Warsop Parish Council

## Grants and Donations

- Working Neighbourhood Fund
- Health and Wellbeing (DCC)
- Big Local

## Small Grants and Donations

- Anonymous Charitable Trusts
- Graysons Solicitors
- Thompsons Solicitors
- OH Parsons Solicitors



**CHESTERFIELD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



North East  
Derbyshire  
District Council



# Statistics

Type of Appeal (Oct 1st 2016 - Sept 30th 2017)	Abandoned	Pending	Completed	Arrears Amount	Weekly Amount
Bereavement	0	2	0	£0.00	£0.00
Carers Allowance	1	0	0	£0.00	£0.00
Child Benefit	0	1	0	£0.00	£0.00
Council Tax Reduction	0	3	0	£0.00	£0.00
Derbyshire Discretionary Fund	0	1	0	£0.00	£0.00
Disability Living Allowance	2	18	8	£13,056.90	£480.55
Employment and Support Allowance	41	372	186	£227,574.16	£5,957.15
Housing Benefit	4	13	0	£0.00	£0.00
Income Support	0	5	0	£0.00	£0.00
Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit	3	17	3	£1,018.00	£33.94
Job Seekers Allowance	6	21	1	£360.00	£30.00
Other	0	4	0	£0.00	£0.00
Pension Credit	0	3	2	£14,531.22	£0.00
Personal Independence Payment	29	304	195	£355,714.74	£13,389.35
Reduced Earnings Allowance	0	3	0	£0.00	£0.00
Social Fund	1	2	0	£0.00	£0.00
Tax Credits	5	25	3	£0.00	£0.00
Attendance Allowance	0	7	3	£3,091.60	£221.05
Universal Credit	0	3	2	£1,238.00	£29.05
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>£616,584.72</b>	<b>£20,141.09</b>

As a result of these tribunals the following amounts were awarded: Lump Sum Arrears: £616,585

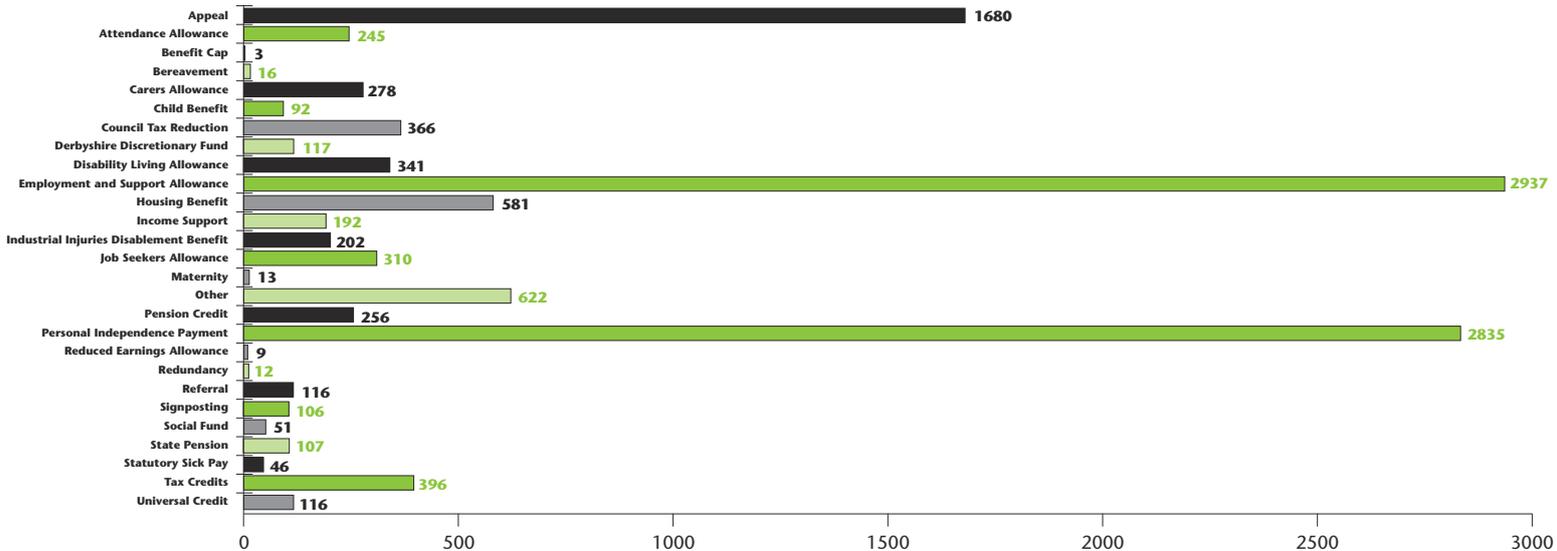
Ongoing Weekly Benefits p.a.: £1,047,332. Over a year general enquiries at the Centres and Outreach Offices (as well as by home visits) resulted in payments amounting to £2,385,293 for Derbyshire residents. During the last year this has meant a total of **£4,049,210** has been won through our advice and representation and at appeals.



# Statistics

## ENQUIRY TOTALS 2016/2017

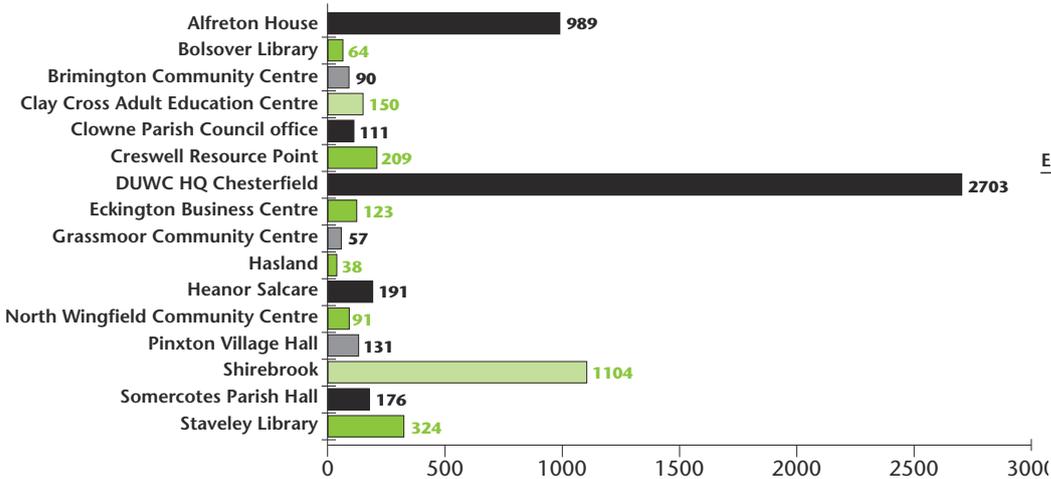
Number of enquiries: 12045



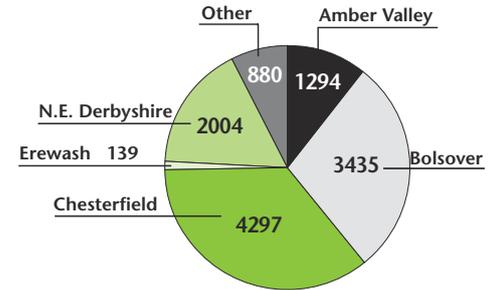
# Statistics

## VENUE CALLER TOTALS 2016/2017

Number of calls: 6551



## ORIGIN OF ENQUIRIES



56	Home Visits	5925	In Person
459	Telephone enquiries	173	Email



# Around the area - Chesterfield



It has been a case of upstairs, downstairs for the advice agencies based in the Town Hall this year. In January the DUWC, Law Centre, TRUST and Links all had to move up a floor to allow essential work to take place in the basement. Despite the upheaval the DUWC provided a seamless service to the public.

The slight change of location did not appear to have a detrimental effect on the numbers seeking to access the service. We are now downstairs and settling back in to the familiar surroundings.

*I just want to thank you so much for your time, patience and wonderful effort towards helping me win my PIP appeal. I'm sure I couldn't have achieved it without your help. Thanks once again.*

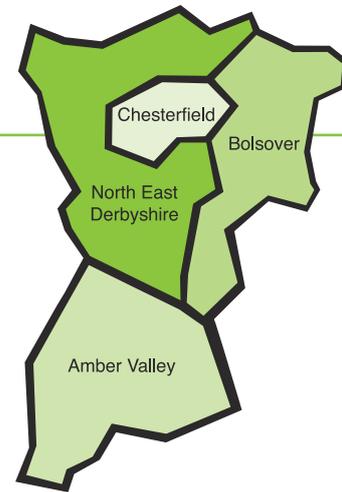
**C.P. Brimington**

Brimington Parish Council continues to give fantastic support to the Centre. Our weekly Community Centre outreach and Chesterfield service has generated 398 enquiries and 19 Appeal tribunals for Brimington residents challenging Department for Work and Pensions decisions. We have a further 27 Appeals waiting to be heard.

In Hasland, with the support of the Big Local, we have completed 3 Appeals and have 17 waiting to be heard.

At Staveley library we have helped people through 34 tribunals with 57 waiting to be progressed. 739 enquiries have been dealt with. 324 of those enquiries were from callers at Staveley library.

The Chesterfield Office is by far our busiest office with many people being signposted to the organisation from the wider voluntary, community and statutory sectors.



# Around the area - Chesterfield

## Case study

A Brimington woman came to us with a distressing case. Sadly, a sibling had died and her claim for a funeral payment had been declined.

DWP maintained that because this woman was not the eldest sibling they did not have to pay and that, the oldest sibling has to take on the financial responsibility. Whilst this in many cases is true there are, and in this case were, mitigating circumstances. We wrote to the DWP explaining that, the family had been estranged from the oldest sibling for over 20 years and this sibling did not even reside in the UK. We wrote to the DWP who reconsidered the case and after two weeks they accepted the claim and paid the claimant £2800.

*Thank you very much for helping me when I needed it you got me through so much, I can't thank you enough.*

**Janet, Grangewood**

*Thank you for all you've done for me in the past regarding my benefits it was most gratefully appreciated. Thank you for being very supportive towards me during my tribunal.*

**Anna, Chesterfield**

## Case study

A Brimington man came to see us as he has problems with his self-care. He is over 65 years old and his income is the State Pension. He has some disabilities and has never claimed a benefit.

We advised him to claim Attendance Allowance. We then helped him complete a claim pack. Some weeks later he got a letter to inform him that his claim was successful and he will receive £83.10 weekly. Since then he has returned with four other local people for the same thing. Happily, three of these have also been successful.



# Around the area - Chesterfield

## Case study

A distressed woman from Chesterfield was signposted to us in the spring of 2016. She had been assessed, at home, for Personal Independence Payment and as a result was going to lose her car as she was reduced from the enhanced rate to the standard rate. Her condition was getting worse. She has suffered from Multiple Sclerosis for the last four years, and cannot walk more than ten metres safely, reliably or repeatedly because of pain, weakness and shaking. During the assessment, she was not asked to demonstrate her difficulties in performing tasks and activities. However they did run a feather across her hand!

*Thank you for your help and support in dealing with my daughters appeal. It is greatly appreciated.*

**Shelia, Chesterfield**

She had done her own mandatory reconsideration and came to us seven weeks after posting as she had not received a decision. Her car was due to be collected on 8th July. With the help of a friend she had gone to the media (press and TV) and written to her MP, staging a family 'sit in' in her car to prevent it from being taken from her. The woman was going to lose her independence without her car.

After our phone calls and much distress she eventually received a decision notice that the DWP upheld their earlier decision following her assessment. She asked us to represent her at Appeal. At times she was close to giving up on the Appeal process.

We informed her that although the media focus was on losing her car the Tribunal would also be looking at her care needs as well as she was on enhanced rate for both.

The woman had been doing her best to live with her

# Around the area - Chesterfield

illness. The fact that she presented herself well and was doing her best not to let the illness beat her had counted against her at the assessment. Her car allowed the woman to take her son to school (she was allowed to use the staff car park). Her mother has early stage dementia and the car is a lifeline to her. Without it she would be virtually housebound and be reliant on others much of the time.

The tribunal was heard in October and a DUWC adviser represented her at the Appeal. The decision was overturned and she was put back on enhanced rates for both care and mobility.

The media attention on this case encouraged more

*Thanks for all your effort.....you've all made my life a lot easier because of your efforts I can now move on.  
Thank you .*

**A.T. Chesterfield**

people to come to us to challenge DWP decisions that otherwise would have been wrongly left to stand.

## Case study

A 65 year old Chesterfield man contacted DUWC's main office requesting a home visit for help completing an Attendance Allowance (AA) form; he had significant disabling conditions and was virtually housebound. We obliged and helped him complete the AA form in his own home. He later contacted us to say that he had received letters from the DWP stating that his AA claim could not be accepted as he was under 65 when he made his claim, so the claim should have been for Personal Independence Payment (PIP). The DWP letter also stated that the man's AA claim with the information it contained, would be sent to the PIP section for consideration and processing.



# Around the area - Chesterfield

Time went by and the man heard nothing about his PIP claim. We rang the DWP PIP section on his behalf and were informed that they had no knowledge of the man's claim or had received any information from the AA section. We contacted the AA section who said they had sent the information from his AA claim. Numerous phone calls were made and nothing was resolved, until the DWP decided to award him AA (but with no arrears or ongoing payments made). This was definitely an error, and maladministration, so we decided to formally complain to the DWP and contact the man's Member of Parliament. Representations were made and eventually the DWP decided that the man's disability claim would be a PIP one.

He was then contacted by ATOS Healthcare who were under contract to carry out PIP functional assessments to say they would be visiting him at home. We were later informed by the man that he had received a phone

call from the visiting ATOS Health Care Professional (HCP) saying they had called at his home and got no answer. His case was to be sent back to the DWP for their further consideration. It turned out that the ATOS HCP called at the man's previous address. We again had to argue that the PIP claim should not be closed as errors had taken place – the DWP were fully aware of his change of address and should have notified ATOS. Finally, a week or two later the man received a PIP decision letter awarding him enhanced mobility and daily living – both highest awards for PIP. The DWP deciding not to assess the man and accept medical evidence of his functional difficulties.

*Many thanks for your help and advice regarding my tribunal, my partner and myself really appreciated your support on the day. Many thanks.*

**Gary, Newbold**

# Around the area - Bolsover



**2018 will mark the 25th Anniversary of the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres (DUWC) becoming established in the District of Bolsover.**

In 1993, following the final pit closures in the area, the organisation was invited to set up an office and outreach venues having helped advise redundant miners, many facing the complexities of the benefits system for the first time. With enthusiastic local support, the Centres base was opened in Shirebrook on Patchwork Row. Outreach offices were established in Pinxton, Bolsover, Creswell and Clowne. From the moment the doors opened the DUWC has been inundated with cries for help, advice and representation. With redundancies, unemployment and the legacy of heavy industry many families have been faced with the problems that arise from claiming benefits and tax credits.

Our Advisers have gained the trust of local people, assisting with complicated forms and challenging decisions made by the Department for Work and Pensions. DUWC have currently 214 Appeals tribunals waiting to be heard for Bolsover District residents.

The last 25 years have been eventful and many people have given voluntary help to the organisation. They have enabled the Centre to provide a consistent and excellent service on a shoestring. Donations from grateful people using our services have helped keep us going. Often those with the least are the most generous.



*Andy Parkes, adviser*



# Around the area - Bolsover

Many people are still unaware of their entitlements. DUWC do not sit waiting for people to come to us but actively go out into the community raising awareness of the help people can access with our assistance. Great support has been given by the District and County Councils. However, the DUWC has used that funding to lever in money from the Lottery, Coalfields Regeneration and a range of charitable trusts. The grants have been well spent, putting money into the pockets of people in the District, helping the regeneration of the area and alleviating poverty.

The role out of Universal Credit comes to the Bolsover area in August 2018. This massive change in the benefit system is going to be a huge challenge to both people in and out of work as well as Advice Agencies and community organisations. One thing is for certain, DUWC will be there, as we have for the last 25 years, helping, representing and challenging injustice.

## Case study

**A polish man came in to see us at our Shirebrook Office seeking our help with his Claim for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). As a European Economic area citizen his route to claiming benefit was much more complex, the habitually residency and right to reside tests being applied when he claimed ESA.**

The polish man arrived in the UK in 2014, finding employment with various local job agencies. In late 2016, early 2017, he became ill and temporarily unfit for work and claimed ESA. His claim was disallowed on the basis that he was not a qualifying person in respect of "retaining worker status" therefore having the right to reside for benefit purposes. The man's benefit decision stated that from the evidence he

# Around the area - Bolsover

presented regarding his employment history in the UK, his work was merely short term and casual, so not “genuine or effective”.

We agreed to represent the man and requested a reconsideration of the benefit decision. We argued that he had continually worked even with short breaks, since arriving in the UK in 2014. The problem was providing the evidence to support his employment record. The Department of Work and Pensions ( DWP) decided following review not to change their decision. We advised the man to appeal but before we put together a case, we set about trying to obtain more information about his employment history. We were able to obtain employment evidence from job agencies and in particular two quite long periods of employment. We again argued that this amounted to long term and sustained work as against short term and casual. We put the case to the DWP that the Polish man should “retain

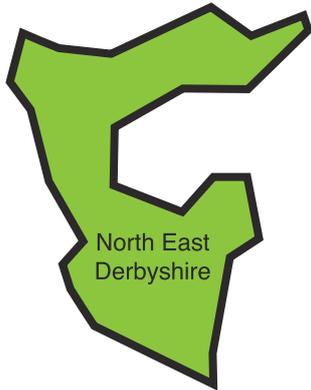
worker status” as he was temporarily unable to work and that his previous employment was “genuine and effective”.

The DWP did agree with our arguments and before the appeal was heard at a Social Security Tribunal, they changed their decision in the man’s favour. He therefore passed the habitual residency test, had the right to reside and was awarded ESA – which was fully backdated.

*Thank you for all the help and care you provided with my claim for extra attendance allowance which just came through backdated to 9/3/17. Best wishes for the future, long may you continue. **Colin, Pleasley***



# Around the area - North East Derbyshire



**The scheduled closure of Clay Cross Jobcentre Plus Office has been a central issue during the year. With the roll out of Universal Credit (UC), the area will be deprived of face to face help. DUWC is actively lobbying on the many issues that UC will bring to North Derbyshire.**

The Department for Work and Pensions will make cost savings from reducing its estate by closing Jobcentre plus Offices. However, it will mean increased costs in travel and access problems for claimants. The voluntary and community sector will also pick up the tab by fielding enquiries that would otherwise have gone to the DWP. Residents from the Clay Cross area will be expected to travel to Chesterfield or Alfreton.

DUWC continues to operate sessions in Eckington, Clay Cross, Grassmoor and North Wingfield. In total, this year

the Centre has dealt with 2005 enquires from residents of North East Derbyshire. We have dealt with 75 Appeal tribunals and have 142 waiting to be heard.

Paul Kent, from Dronfield has now developed a new improved version of our Case Management System (CMS). This is called the HOPE system. He is in the process of training staff and volunteers to use it and we will go live in early November. Paul has now set up in business – see [www.omtio.com](http://www.omtio.com).

Great support has been forthcoming from Parish Councils that have recognised the importance in providing accessible services for people in their area.

## Case study

**A resident of Grassmoor came into our drop in session to have a benefits check to see if he was entitled to any help for him or his wife. They were of pension age and received only their state pension and his pit pension. They had never been**

# Around the area - North East Derbyshire

in receipt of any welfare benefits and had not worked since leaving employment as a miner in the early 1990s due to health reasons.

After asking a number of questions it became clear that a claim for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) needed to be made as he suffered from osteoarthritis, vibration white finger and carpal tunnel syndrome as a result of working on the coal face. The claim was made and a medical was attended to assess the nature of his conditions. As a result of this an award for IIDB was granted for £50.91 per week. Additionally we are in the process of applying for Reduced Earnings Allowance as he was not able to go back into 'regular' or equivalent employment due to conditions which arose prior to October 1st 1990. Subsequently this man has referred two friends who were employed in the same industry to our Grassmoor and North Wingfield outreaches as they suffer with the same conditions. Both of whom have made IIDB claims and are awaiting their results.

## Case study

**Two Claimants came from Killamarsh to see us for advice and their only income was £108 per week which was wages earned by one of the claimants.**

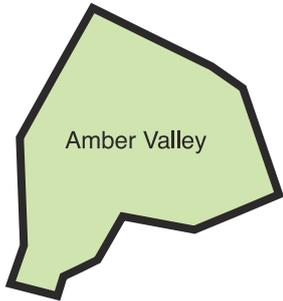
The other partner had put in a claim for ESA. This was refused but the decision had not been challenged.

Our adviser helped him put in a new claim for ESA on the basis that he had a worsening condition. He was advised to claim PIP. He put in a claim for PIP and he was awarded Standard daily living and enhanced mobility. This gave him £112.55 per week. His partner could now claim Carers Allowance. This gave her £62.10 per week. This is nearly three times more than their previous income.

The couple could also claim Income Support as a top up. The Income support was £45.30 per week. Total maximisation of income was £219.95 per week.



# Around the area - Amber Valley



**Our work in Amber Valley is concentrated on Alfreton, Somercotes, Heanor and Loscoe. It is the support of the Town and Parish Councils that has preserved our services in Amber Valley despite a lack of Borough Council funding.**

The year started with many tribunals arising out of the Max Your Money 'open door' benefits and tax credits take up

*I cannot thank you enough for the service that you have afforded to me. Words fail but you have made a veteran very happy. Thanks.*

***Jim Langley Mill***

campaign. 41 Appeals were undertaken and many were won before reaching tribunal. As we move towards 2018 we have 51 Appeals pending in Amber Valley and the demands on our services increase each month.

We have accepted a number of volunteers from Amber Valley CVS.

Georgia Durose is a work experience student from the University of Derby and is supporting Glynn Power in our Alfreton Office. Henry Foulds, an Alfreton resident, is volunteering at our Chesterfield Office.

They have assisted our operations in dealing with 1294 enquires from Amber Valley with over 900 callers at our Alfreton Office many from outside the Borough as people travel into the town from outside the area.

It is the unstinting support of Alfreton Town Council, Somercotes Parish Council and Heanor and Loscoe Town Council that spurs us on to provide help, support and representation in areas that have little open door face to face provision.

# Around the area - Amber Valley

## Case study

Mr. S from Ironville qualified for Reduced Earnings Allowance because he had an award of at least 1% in respect of an accident that occurred before 1-10-90. He was unable to return to his regular job or do work of a similar standard because of the effects of the disablement. However, he was able to find a regular part time job of 12 hours per week.

He received a letter from DWP informing him that his REA would be reduced from £67.20 per week to the Retirement Allowance of £16.80 per week because he had reached retirement age.

*Thank you very much for getting my daughter her PIP back*

**Mrs. W. Riddings**

*Sir, your dedication is so much appreciated. Sincere Thanks.*

**Frank, Loscoe**

We rang DWP and informed them that he was still in regular employment of over 10 hours per week even though he had reached retirement age. They apologised for their mistake and his full payments of REA were reinstated

*Thanks Glynn, Couldn't have done it without your help. Regards.*

**Louise, Somercotes**



# Around the area - Amber Valley

## Case study

Mrs. T from Somercotes required our help because of her problems with depression/anxiety. We helped her with a claim for Employment Support Allowance because she had to stop working through ill health. Subsequently she was placed in the Support Group & received £109.30 per week. We also requested a Personal Independence Payment form be sent to her and she was awarded standard daily living/mobility which gave her a further £76.90 per week.

Because she was entitled to the standard rate of PIP and lived alone and did not have a carer she was also entitled to the Severe Disability Premium of £61.85 per week.

## Case study

Mr. W from Heanor was informed by DWP that his ESA payments would be reduced by a total of

£23 per week because he had savings of £11,750 which included money being invested in Premium Bonds. Mr W had savings of £5,000 but was unaware of the other amounts referred to.

We rang DWP who stated they were right about the saving and the deduction of £23 tariff income would continue. We requested a Mandatory Reconsideration of their decision with a view of taking it to a Tribunal and sent in bank statements showing total savings. We also informed them that Mr. W had no other accounts or Premium Bonds.

This resulted in DWP informing Mr. W that the £23 they had stopped for over 10 weeks would be paid back into his bank account.

*Thank you very much for getting my daughter her PIP back. **Debra, Alfreton***

# User Feedback Survey 2017

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

0 – 5 minutes	37
5 – 15 minutes	22
15 – 30 minutes	12
30 – 60 minutes	16
Over – 1 hour	10

**Each individual was asked if they would use our service again. 97** 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.**

**97** said they would. **100% positive.**

**Each individual was asked how they had heard of the service we provide.**

Told by family or friends	52
Previous use of advice services	13
Law Centre	2
CAB	2

Jobcentre Plus	10
Local Authority	1
Display sign	9
No comment	8

**Each person was asked how they felt about their visit to DUWC.**

Very Happy – excellent service	86
Satisfied – staff have done their best	11
Dissatisfied – could do better	0
Very Unhappy – the service was poor	0
None of the above	0



# 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.  
Wednesday 1.30pm - 3.30pm.

**NORTH WINGFIELD** - Community Resources Centre,  
Whiteleas Avenue. Thursday 1.00pm - 3.30pm.

**HASLAND** - Unit 2 Penmore Business Centre,  
Hasland Road. Wednesday 1.30pm - 3.30pm.

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

**STAVELEY** - Staveley Library, Hall Lane.  
Wednesday & Thursday 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** - Bolsover Library, Church Street.  
Tuesday 9.00am - 11.30am

**CLOWNE** - Community Centre, Recreation Close.  
Wednesday 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.

# Trustees 2016/2017

The Trustees 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.

## Trustees

Cllr. Graham Baxter MBE  
Ian Rutledge  
John Knight  
Hilary Cave  
Cllr. Mary Kerry  
Rueben Redhead  
Nicolo Ferrara  
Elaine Tidd

Cllr. Amanda Serjeant  
Barry Johnson  
Sarah Roy  
Angela Webster  
Cllr. Steve Marshall-Clarke  
Cllr. Stephen Fritchley  
Wyllie Hume

## Centre Staff 2017

Colin Hampton - Co-ordinator  
Andy Parkes - Assistant Co-ordinator/Welfare Rights Advisor  
Lynn Bagshaw - Administrator  
Tim Wilkinson - Welfare Rights Advisor  
Katrina Hudson - Welfare Rights Advisor  
Glynn Power - Welfare Rights Advisor  
Justine Bark - Welfare Rights Advisor  
Paul Marklew - Welfare Rights Advisor  
Brigit Long - Welfare Rights Advisor  
John Power - Welfare Rights Advisor

## Keith Myhill

Keith Myhill died shortly after the last Annual Report was published. He served on the DUWC Management Committee and then as a Trustee. He was for many years a Trades Council delegate from NASUWT teachers union and played a key role in our work, specifically working on the organisations policies. Keith was the NASUWT rep for many years at Tupton School where he led the art department. Keith was a committed defender of all that is best in the education system and was tenacious in campaigning to defend the rights of his colleagues and the communities that they served. In addition to his union activities, Keith was a competitive chess player and a formidable gardener. He will be much missed.



# Thanks

To all our funders, our Trustees,  
our OFFA Contributors and all our supporters.



Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres are funded by Bolsover District Council, Chesterfield Borough Council, North East Derbyshire District Council, Derbyshire County Council, Brimington Parish Council, Alfreton Town Council, Somercotes Parish Council, and many town and parish councils across Derbyshire as well as contributions raised through the One Fund For All.

