

*Welcome to the
Voluntary Sector Awards 2018*



Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres

Annual Report 2018



Contents

| | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Who are we? | 2 |
| The Chairman writes | 3 |
| The Co-ordinator writes | 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 | 26-28 |
| User Survey Feedback 2018 | 29 |
| Where to get advice? | 30 |
| Trustees 2017/2018 | 31 |

Front cover: Colin Hampton on behalf of Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres receives award for 'Outstanding Contribution to the Voluntary Sector 2018'. Colin is pictured alongside the other Voluntary Sector winners.

Who are we?

Now over 35 years old, the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centres is part of a larger network of TUC Unemployed Workers' Centres. From a high point of 250 Centres back in the 1980s there are now far fewer but they still punch above their weight, keeping full employment and dignity for benefits recipients high up the political agenda.

The Centres aim to prevent or relieve poverty amongst the unemployed, underemployed, unwaged and those in receipt of, or entitled to, benefits and tax credits, as well as other disadvantaged people in those areas of Derbyshire where grant aid is provided.



Some of our staff and volunteers outside HQ



The organisation has strong links with the communities it serves. All staff and volunteers at

DUWC started off as volunteers. All are committed to the aims and objectives of 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 12,000 enquiries at our centres and outreach venues. We have recovered over £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 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 whom move on into paid employment.

Volunteers

A number of new volunteers have joined our ranks this year. They join our team of volunteer advisers: Shirley Peirson, Alison Jarvis, Keith O'Neill, Dick Banker, Jon Jarvis, Will Nightingale, Sue Wheatcroft and Georgia Durose.

Some of our volunteers from 2017 have moved into work. Linda Cantrill is now working in a care home. Marta Jaskot is working at the surgery in Shirebrook. Callum Salfield is working for the Trade Union UCU at Loughborough University. Steven Tomlinson joined us briefly before moving into work at B & Q. Maxine Smart left the organisation and continues to run her own business. James Pattison is taking time out to complete his PHD at Nottingham University. Barry Noakes is taking a break with family commitments.

Joining us this year have been Ian Christian, Lyndsey Nicholls, Tabatha Mangle, Clare Fields and Angela Nussey.

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

The Chairman writes

The callous decision by the controlling group at Derbyshire County Council (DCC) to strip the DUWC of a third of its funding was enacted to bring the organisation to its knees. For thirty five years, the DUWC has highlighted the problems of people out of work, claiming benefits or in precarious work. Whatever the Government, the Centres have presented evidence and lobbied to secure a better deal for those that use their services. They have provided a voice for the powerless and engaged in policy discussions with both local and national government politicians and departments.

This is a voice that the present administration at DCC does not want to hear. £50,000 of the monies cut was from Public Health. This funding was used to support people through the process of challenging decisions to stop or reduce benefits, cases often ending up in court. DUWC provided representation for people who had presented themselves at Health-related settings – via Citizens Advice who have not got the capacity to support the many

people challenging decisions. In April DUWC had over 800 tribunals waiting to be heard in court. The Council did not seem concerned, or contingencies made, regarding the fall-out of their funding cut.

Over the years the DUWC has helped and advised thousands of people. It was now our turn to ask for solidarity and practical help. Donations have poured in. Individuals and Trade Union Branches have rallied to our call for help. The support has been superb and has guaranteed that, at least for this year, the Centres have not had to make swingeing cuts. We have had to suspend services in the south of Amber Valley as the cost of tribunals in Nottingham and Derby cannot be borne.

On behalf of everyone at the DUWC, I would like to thank our supporters for coming to our aid at this time of crisis. Long may your support continue.



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



The Co-ordinator writes

In an emergency, it is when you find out who your friends are. Our difficulties, created as a result of the grant cut from Derbyshire County Council, could have destroyed the organisation that has been an integral part of our community since 1983. We have faced many hurdles throughout the years with funding cuts and losses, dilapidated buildings, departure of key and treasured staff and trustees – but the blow of losing a third of our funding was probably the nearest we have come to heading into a downward spiral that would put the Centres out of existence.

Thankfully, many individuals and organisations came to our aid. From the change given by grateful recipients of help, advice and representation, to the big individual and group donations our immediate survival has been ensured. With the roll-out of Universal Credit, the problems facing people out of work, sick, disabled or in precarious work, are going to be difficult and complex. Our services are going to be much in demand. Staff and volunteers have had to get to grips with the new system. Together with

the voluntary and community sector in the area, we have done our best to make sure people know where to go to access help.

This Annual Report outlines the massive contribution that DUWC makes in our community. There are 515 tribunals where support and representation was provided; over 11,000 enquiries received; and dealt with and over £4.5million was brought into the local economy. We give voice to those people caught up in the chaotic system of Universal Credit. Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centres will not be cowed by crude attempts to stifle our impact and the services we provide.

The people who set up this organisation over 35 years ago could not have envisaged the decades of sustained attacks on the poor, the unemployed, the sick and the disabled. Through the years we have endeavoured to remain true to the mission set out by those early campaigners. The Centres will provide help, representation and advice but will lobby politicians to make sure the voices of those we assist are heard loud and clear.



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

Your Voice Your Rights!

Would you Credit it?

- debt and housing cost problems hit local people experiencing Government's new Universal Credit system

Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres have conducted a survey of 100 Universal Credit Claimants in the Chesterfield area eight months after the full digital roll-out. With the help of volunteers from Unite the Union they interviewed people outside Chesterfield Jobcentre and asked them about their experiences of claiming the Government's new benefit.

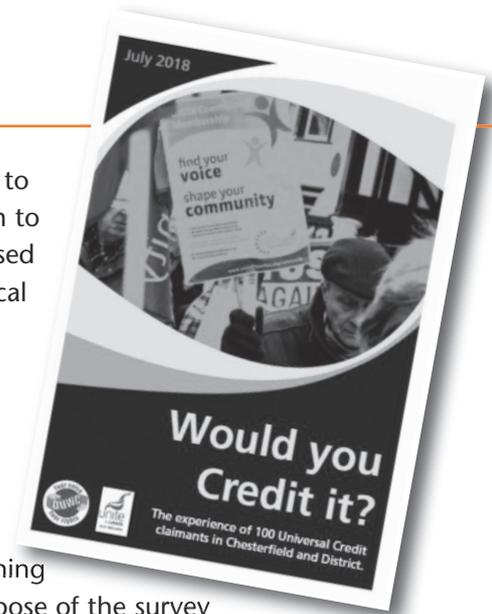
Universal Credit (UC) replaces six existing 'legacy' benefits to be claimed if a person is on a low income or out of work. All new claimants or those who have had a change of circumstances have to claim UC.

We decided it was time to obtain a clearer picture of the impact of UC in North Derbyshire. A good number of people have visited our offices with problems relating to Universal Credit. Some have required the intervention of

the local MP's office to gain some resolution to issues that have caused great hardship to local residents.

DUWC, by its very nature, only sees people who are having difficulties with the statutory bodies and the claiming of benefits. The purpose of the survey was to obtain a more rounded view as to how the changes were affecting the local population.

A fortnight in July 2018 was set aside for volunteers from Unite Community to interview those UC claimants exiting the Jobcentre office on Markham Road. The report makes grim reading and identifies a number of issues facing a significant number of people claiming the benefit.



Your Voice Your Rights!

Over half had a negative view of the new benefit and over a quarter had problems either claiming the benefit on-line or maintaining their claim through an on-line journal.

34 respondents said they had been put into debt by UC with some forced to use foodbanks to survive as well as borrowing from friends and family. Nearly a third of respondents said that they had been put into housing cost problems. As some of the 100 people interviewed were living with their parents, those with housing-related problems totalled nearly a half of those who could be put into difficulties.

Rent arrears were raised by a number of people and the fear of eviction was evident in the responses. A number reported the problems of monthly budgeting on a low income. Disabled people and those who are sick, reported a huge drop in income as a result of moving on to UC when they had reported a change of circumstances.

One area where UC received a favourable response was in the relationship with the staff at the jobcentre. 53% had a positive experience of the 'work coaches'.

DUWC is using the evidence collected from the survey to lobby politicians and it has formed part of the evidence submitted to the Parliamentary Social Security Advisory Committee. Volunteers were able to signpost many of those interviewed to support services where applicable.

Evidence from Voluntary and Community organisations as well as Local Authorities seems to be ignored as the Government presses on with the implementation of Universal Credit. Access to the benefit has been devised for the benefit of administrators not the recipients of UC. The damage done by forcing people into debt, far from helping people into work, as the Government claims, is driving people away from the job market as spiralling debt impacts on people's mental and physical wellbeing.

The Centre has called for wider independent research and warns of worsening problems as the system is further rolled out to those already on 'legacy benefits'.

Unite the Union has called for Universal Credit to be scrapped before more damage is done.

Your Voice Your Rights!

A selection of the responses

Problems with on-line making and maintaining a claim -

'struggling – not computer literate'

'problem with verification – had to sort at jobcentre'

'don't have wifi – can be difficult to access daily'

'on-line awful – people promise to phone back then don't'

Some who said they didn't have any problems neither made or maintained the claim themselves, with friends or family lending a hand.

Taking an Advance

'first payment took forever'

'ten weeks wait for money – borrowed £300 from sister – living with no electricity or food'

'has reduced payments now and they are deducting more than they said – never phone back'

'better than nothing for a month – underpayment took two months to sort out'

Debt

'payment days can be inconsistent making direct debits a problem'

'left to starve for six weeks – had to go to foodbank'

'£3000 in debt and no free school meals'

'wage threshold on part-time work can lead to no money for



Colin Hampton and Lesley Mathews on the day of the Report launch
Photograph courtesy of Derbyshire Times

Your Voice Your Rights!

six weeks – wasn't told to claim housing benefit and ended up paying a full year's council tax'

'used all savings – applied for loan – have got four children'

'yes, three weeks owed on rent –still trying to catch up - £300 in debt'

'had to wait seven weeks for first payment – used foodbank and all three discretionary fund payments of £60 from Council'

Work Coaches

'staff have been great'

'nice – very supportive – only one not so good'

'pushing to apply for jobs out of area'

'wants to see more applications – travel costs a problem £3.70 per day to attend three time per week'



The survey volunteers also directed people for face-to face advice.

Housing Cost problems

'housing costs take up rest of my money. £300 allocated by UC for Rent – but rent £320 per month'

'can't pay rent – serious problem'

'rent arrears – I have eviction notices'

'Yes owe rent due to delays in UC'

'six month rent arrears on Council property'

'lost his flat – has £1000 rent arrears – No fixed abode now – sofa surfs'



Your Voice Your Rights!

Money Sorted

It is the second year of the 'Money Sorted in D2N2' project. A number of organisations across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire have come together in a consortium to deliver a project supported by the Big Lottery and the European Social Fund. This project is funded by the European Social Fund and the National Lottery, through the Big Lottery 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.

John Power is our 'Personal Navigator' working on the project. The caseload that John has taken on has shown the complexity of problems that stand between an individual and a return to the job market.

Henry Smith

The Centres have been successful in attracting funding from the Henry Smith Charity. Our three year project is designed to help people through crisis prevention work. Andy Parkes has taken on the role of support worker, identifying individuals whose circumstance may lead to a crisis point without our intervention. The project involves assisting on average 100 people per year and supporting and training a team of volunteers. The project has encouraged the development of our case management system with the help of our IT guru Paul Kent of Omtio.com. We are now able to show the outcomes of our work in terms other than financial. Wellbeing, Access and Awareness, control of finances and better proximity to the labour market can all now be measured against our intervention. 120 people have already been supported under this programme with the vast majority of the work still ongoing as we are only six months into the project.

Your Voice Your Rights!

Bi-lingual Buddies Service

Based in Shirebrook our service to people whose first language is not English has been inundated with enquiries. The project is a collaboration between Direct Help and Advice, Derbyshire Law Centre and Links CVS. On Wednesday mornings Maria Kazimirska helps people navigate their problems. Maria has taken over from Marta Jaskot who went on to find full time employment in Shirebrook. The project has been so successful and well utilised that the DUWC is trying to attract funding to expand the service.



Maria Kazimirska

Since the beginning of the project 66 people have been assisted on issues covering housing, benefits, debts as well as family issues, employment problems and foodbank referrals.



DARMOWE PORADY

Martwisz się o pracę, mieszkanie, rodzinę?
Chcesz rozmawiać z kimś w swoim ojczystym języku?
Nie płać 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

- przepisy mieszkaniowe
- przepisy rodzinnych
- zasilanie
- zatrudnienia
- zdrowie (np. ciąża, porodowy)
- dług publicznych

Przyjdź do nas na Dzien Otwarty, poraż nowych deweloperów z pomocnikami i innymi pracownikami z Towarnej organizacji Językowej tutaj, by pomóc Tobie i Twojej rodzinie. Działaj z nami i wypracujmy wspólnie wraz z naszymi współpracownikami wolontariuszami! Działaj z nami i wypracujmy wspólnie poradę z wyjątkowo wyjątkowego zakresu.

Doradzamy w zakresie:
w każdą środę
9am to 11:30am
Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centre
44 Patchwork Row, Shirebrook
NG20 8AL

DHA Direct Help & Advice
Derbyshire Law Centre
DUWC Your voice Your rights
BIG LOTTERY FUND

Now 1 Rose Hill East

Our Funders 2018

Local Authorities

- Chesterfield Borough Council
- Derbyshire County Council (until March 31st 2018)
- North East Derbyshire District Council
- Bolsover District Council

Parish and Town Councils

- Alfreton 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
- Scarcliffe Parish Council
- Shirebrook Town Council
- Somercotes Parish Council
- Staveley Town Council
- Tibshelf Parish Council
- Unstone Parish Council
- Warsop Parish Council

Grants and Donations

- Henry Smith
- Derbyshire One Fund For All

- Money Sorted in D2N2 – European Social Fund – Big Lottery Fund
- Unite East Midlands Region
- Thompsons Solicitors
- Graysons Solicitors
- O H Parsons Solicitors

Small Grants and Donations

- Big Local
- DCC Community Priorities Programme
- Chesterfield Health and Wellbeing
- Anonymous Charitable Trusts



**NATIONAL
LOTTERY FUNDED**



European Union
European
Social Fund

Statistics

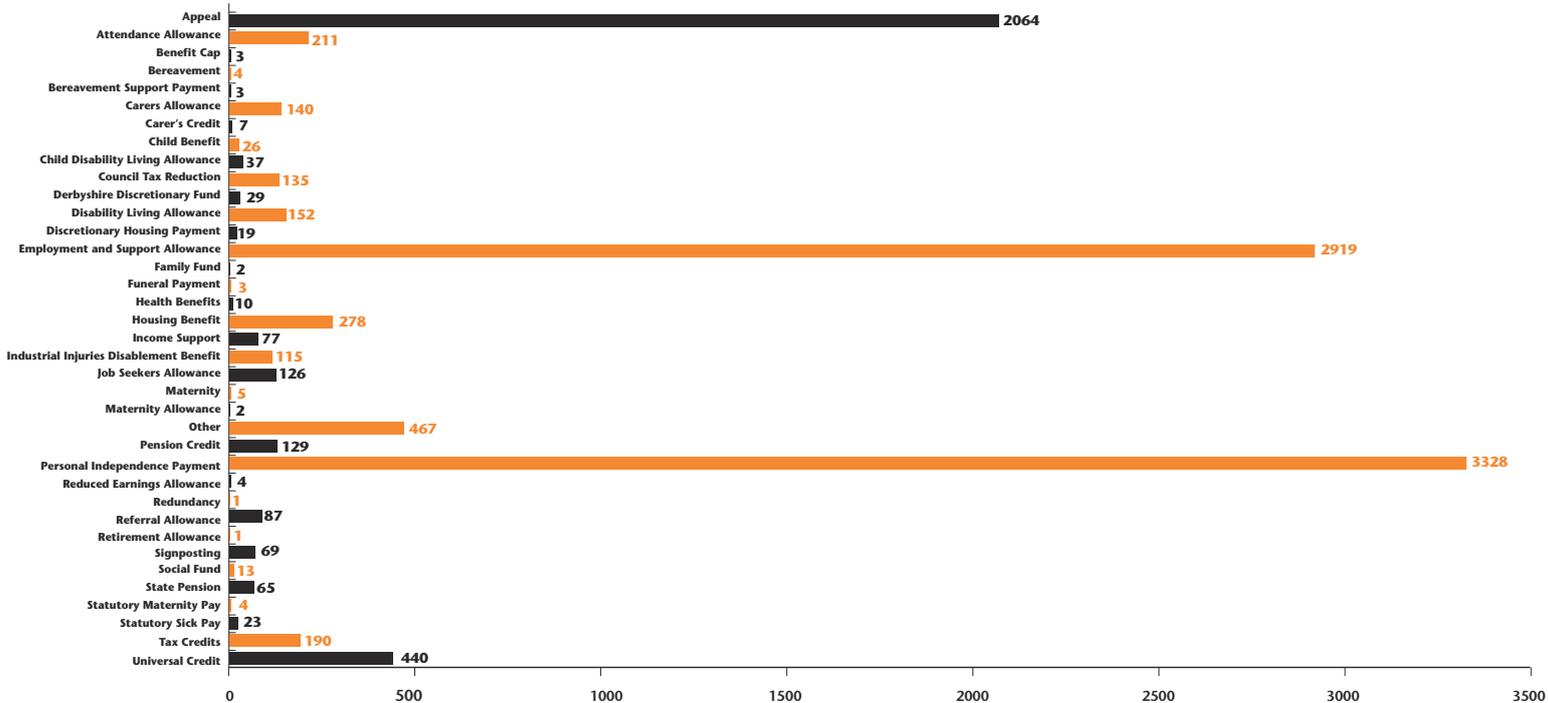
| Type of Appeal (Oct 1st 2017 - Sept 30th 2018) | Abandoned | Pending | Completed | Arrears Amount | Weekly Amount |
|--|------------|------------|------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Attendance Allowance | 6 | 6 | 7 | £2,409.90 | £249.30 |
| Bereavement | 0 | 1 | 1 | £1,000.00 | £0.00 |
| Carers Allowance | 0 | 4 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Child Benefit | 1 | 0 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Child Disability Living Allowance | 1 | 8 | 1 | £1,000.00 | 55.00 |
| Council Tax Reduction | 0 | 2 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Disability Living Allowance | 4 | 14 | 8 | £19,942.82 | £424.95 |
| Employment and Support Allowance | 78 | 314 | 251 | £272,057.67 | £10,513.16 |
| Housing Benefit | 2 | 15 | 1 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Income Support | 1 | 5 | 1 | £1,608.00 | £73.10 |
| Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit | 5 | 4 | 5 | £2,836.00 | £109.85 |
| Job Seekers Allowance | 1 | 13 | 1 | £668.00 | £0.00 |
| Pension Credit | 1 | 1 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Personal Independence Payment | 57 | 420 | 227 | £440,391.78 | £14,195.96 |
| Reduced Earnings Allowance | 1 | 2 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Social Fund | 0 | 1 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Tax Credits | 8 | 17 | 1 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Universal Credit | 1 | 20 | 8 | £5,316.00 | £797.82 |
| TOTAL | 167 | 847 | 512 | £747,230.17 | £26,419.14 |

As a result of these tribunals the following amounts were awarded: Lump Sum Arrears: £747,230. Ongoing Weekly Benefits p.a.: £1,375,306. Over a year general enquiries at the Centres and Outreach Offices (as well as by home visits) resulted in payments amounting to £2,482,175 for Derbyshire residents. During the last year this has meant a total of **£4,604,711** has been won through our advice and representation at Appeal Tribunals.

Statistics

ENQUIRY TOTALS 2017/2018

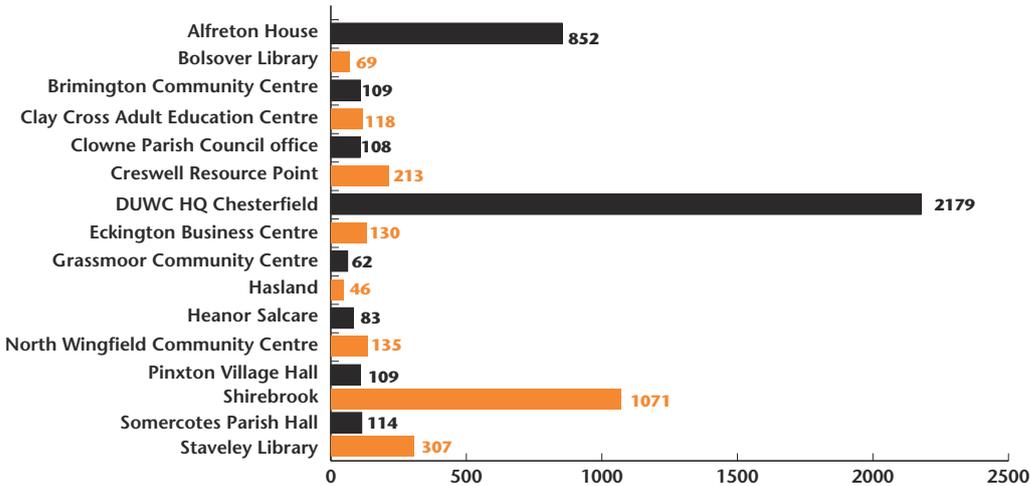
Number of enquiries: 11,188



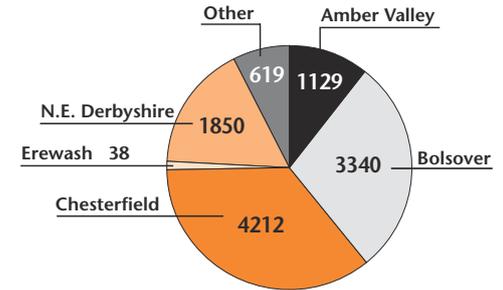
Statistics

VENUE CALLER TOTALS 2017/2018

Number of calls: 5705



ORIGIN OF ENQUIRIES



| | | | |
|-----|---------------------|------|-----------|
| 48 | Home Visits | 5265 | In Person |
| 344 | Telephone enquiries | 96 | Email |



Around the area - Chesterfield



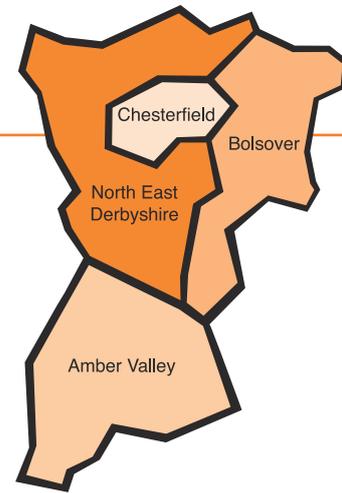
The full digital roll out of Universal Credit has been in Chesterfield now since November 2017. The number of people coming to see us with regards to the new system has now risen to be the third highest reason why people access our advice. This will increase dramatically as the Universal Credit system begins to affect those transferring from existing benefits.

In Chesterfield we have been supported by Chesterfield Health and Wellbeing with the provision of lap-top computers in order that we can help people in the interview rooms in the town hall offices and at our Chesterfield Outreaches.

The much publicised funding cut authorised by the controlling group at the Derbyshire County Council led some people to believe that the Centre had shut.

We can assure readers of this Annual Report that the Centre is very much up and running – helping, advising and representing people throughout Chesterfield and North and East Derbyshire.

Brimington Parish Council have continued to give first class support to the Centres. 353 enquiries have been received at our Brimington Community Centre outreach from local residents. This year we have represented 18 people from Brimington at Appeals tribunal and have 30 more waiting to be heard.



Staff and Volunteers at Chesterfield HQ

Around the area - Chesterfield

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

In Hasland, with the support of the Big Local, we have seen a big increase in the number of Appeals. 15 people have been represented and we have 22 awaiting a court date.

At our Staveley Library outreach we have seen a large number of enquiries with a number accessing our services in Chesterfield.

Just a note to say many thanks for your help in filling out my PIP form. I have just got awarded standard care and enhanced mobility which is a massive improvement for me. Doubt I should have done quite so well without your valuable contribution. **John, Brimington**

Staveley residents have seen 54 Appeals tribunals and 87 are waiting to be heard. 306 enquiries were received at the Staveley Library.

Case study - Brimington

A woman from Brimington came to see us as her disabled son's Disability Living Allowance (DLA) had been stopped following a review. We asked her to speak with Children's and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMS) together with his School and GP.

Details were supplied of her son's conditions and the support he required. These documents were sent with a covering letter requesting a Mandatory Reconsideration of the decision. After a wait of four weeks the DWP overturned their decision, the DLA was restored and the arrears were paid.



Around the area - Chesterfield

Case study - Brimington

A Brimington man came to see us with regard to a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) application. He had made a claim following a serious brain injury and as a result he has limitations both physically and mentally. Unfortunately, DWP had rejected his claim.

We firstly asked the DWP to reconsider their decision. However the decision was not revised. On his behalf, we began the appeal process. However, just before the tribunal hearing, the DWP contacted us with an offer of an award both in respect to his daily living needs and his mobility problems. This award was accepted by our client and the tribunal hearing was not needed.

Case study - Grangewood

A 50yr old Chesterfield man who suffers from Parkinson's disease was made redundant. While in work his employer had provided the necessary support to enable him to carry out his duties.

Since being made redundant his condition had deteriorated. He came to us for a benefits check.

Recognising the extent of his disability he was awarded a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) to assist him in his daily life. He also made an application for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). However despite the severity of his condition a work capability assessment found he was fit for work.

Being clearly unfit, we sought, on his behalf, a Mandatory Reconsideration of the decision to compel him to look for work. The request was not successful and we escalated the matter to a Tribunal.

The Appeal was successful and the client was placed in the Work Related Activity Group so relieving him of the obligation to seek employment. In addition to the increased benefit, he received a back payment of benefit from the date he first applied.

Following this, we carried out a benefits check. We discovered that an omission had been made by the DWP in that he should have also been in receipt of a

Around the area - Chesterfield

Severe Disability Premium from the date he was granted PIP. On his behalf we contacted the DWP and the premium was applied to his ESA together with retrospective payment from the date he became first entitled.

As a result of our intervention on his behalf, his benefit entitlement was doubled.

Case Study - Hasland

A woman attended our Hasland Outreach after failing the habitual residency test which led to the refusal of Universal Credit. The claimant has been living in UK since 2011 and was married to someone who had been in full-time employment since 2004. She was now separated but importantly not divorced. The relationship had not ended amicably and had resulted in the claimant staying in a refuge for a number of months.

We helped her challenge the decision as DWP regulations state that you can derive a permanent right to reside through a family member. In this case she qualified through her estranged husband and this was the case made to the DWP. This initial challenge was refused by the DWP as she had not provided evidence of her partner's work history. However, we had provided his National Insurance number and the name of his most recent employer.

We submitted an appeal to the tribunal service. We argued that the DWP had failed to do enough to access the husband's work history and were not basing their decision on the facts provided.

After submitting the appeal the DWP revised their decision with an apology. The reason given for the change was that the previous 2 DWP decisions had been 'made in ignorance of material facts' despite further information being provided by the claimant.



Around the area - Bolsover



Next year, all being well, the Shirebrook office, from where our work in the Bolsover District is based, will relocate. Our home since 1995, 44/46 Patchwork Row, has seen better days and is in need of a great deal of repair and a facelift. The impending move of Shirebrook Town Council to new premises

means that there is a possibility of a move for the DUWC to the former Jobcentre office on Patchwork Row. The new premises will provide both better facilities for staff, volunteers and the public seeking our help and advice. The present estimate is that if we are able to relocate, it will be by the middle of 2019.

Our Outreach offices continue at Bolsover Library, Clowne Community Centre, Creswell Limestone House and Pinxton Parish Council Offices.

The Centres have received fantastic support from Pinxton Parish Council where the service is particularly well used, with 9 tribunals carried out this year and 19 waiting to be heard.

In Clowne, the Parish Council has moved our service to the Community Centre with the relocation of the Parish Council Office.

The Shirebrook office has been home to the Bilingual Buddies Project where our Polish speaking sessional worker offers help and advice. In total in the Bolsover District we have completed 112 tribunals this year and have 247 waiting to be heard.



Kare Seymour

Around the area - Bolsover

Case Study - Shirebrook

A woman had been placed in the WRAG group from Support Group but did not understand the difference. She was told she had to attend Jobcentre Plus - which she did. She only became aware of the difference after receiving a letter stating she had had her 365 days on contribution-based ESA and there would be no further payments.

The JC+ at Shirebrook sent her to see us as they said they were unable to help. On looking at her medical condition

We could not have coped without you all. I would not have known where to start. Carry on with the good work and help others who, probably like us, do not know, which way to turn.

Eileen, Langwith.



Some of our staff and volunteers at Shirebrook

she had learning difficulties and suffered from severe narcolepsy plus other medical conditions. We advised her to put in a late appeal which was successful and she was placed back in support group after raising issues around her safety. She received £470 arrears payment.



Around the area - Bolsover

Case Study - Clowne

A man on the autistic spectrum failed his Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) assessment and was placed on Jobseekers Allowance (JSA). After challenging this at a tribunal on the 12/07/2016 he was placed in Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) as opposed to the Support Group. I advised him that the decision could be challenged but he said he would be ok.

He came to the Clowne outreach on 22/02/2017, later saying they wanted him to go on courses and he could not cope. I explained this was part of WRAG criteria and he would be expected to comply. As he feared being reassessed again, he said he would try to comply.

On 07/03/2018 he was sent with a note from his work coach saying he should not be in the WRAG with his condition and that he should be in the Support Group. I rang the work coach and asked why they had not raised this as an issue before, as he had been in WRAG since

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

Gary, Shirebrook

2016. The work coach was unhelpful and said he would need to ask to be reassessed.

After attempting to do this by phone we were told it was not possible and the decision to be put in WRAG would have to be challenged via a Mandatory Reconsideration (MR). I explained that this would be going against a Tribunal Decision but was told this was the only way to proceed.

After a lengthy appeal process his case was eventually heard at a tribunal. The decision from the tribunal was overturned and he was placed back in the Support Group receiving £430 arrears payment.

Around the area - Bolsover

Case Study - Bolsover

A woman was refused Disability Living Allowance for her autistic son. After challenging this decision via a Mandatory Reconsideration he was awarded middle rate care and low rate mobility which was not suitable considering his health condition. As such, this was appealed.

At tribunal, he was awarded High Rate Care and Low Rate Mobility. On talking to his mother I explained that the Judge had missed some important facts about how her son conducted himself at home. The tribunal said he was left alone in his room so therefore was not supervised outside, which meant Mobility was kept at Low. However, when inside he was in a safe room in his house when resting and his mum was always close at hand.

She agreed to appeal to the Upper Tribunal who upon checking, agreed the original decision contained many mistakes and sent the case back to be reheard. The

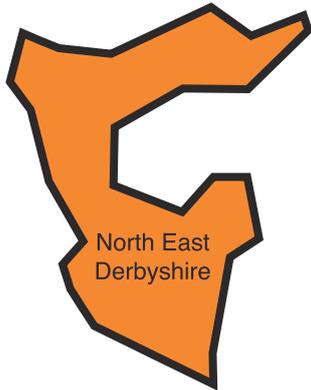
second tribunal heard the case and awarded High Rate Care and High Rate Mobility. This decision resulted in back-dated arrears totalling £7850.



The DUWC hopes to move to the premises in the photo on Patchwork Row. Funny old world!



Around the area - North East Derbyshire



The full digital roll-out of Universal Credit has affected some NE Derbyshire residents since November 2017 and more have now been subject to the new system since the summer. We continue to raise areas of deep concern emanating from our advice work across the District. We

continue to operate out of Grassmoor and North Wingfield Community Centres as well as Eckington and Clay Cross. Great support from Parish Councils has been very welcome. Over the year we have represented at 99 tribunals for people in North East Derbyshire District and we have 132 pending.

Paul Kent (see www.omtio.com) from Dronfield has further developed our Case Management System. 'Hope', as it is now called, has been improved and now allows us

to measure soft outcomes as well as statistics and financial gains. On our Henry Smith Charity project we can now record the distance travelled by people engaged in the project, in Wellbeing, Financial Capability, Proximity to the Labour Market and Awareness of Advice and Support.

Thank you so much for all the work you do and for being there.

Pauline, Grassmoor

I would like to say a very big thank you for all the work you have done for me during the last eight months. Your knowledge and professionalism was second to none I would never have been able to take on the DWP without your help. The work you and your team do for the people of Chesterfield is absolutely fantastic.

Paul, N.Wingfield

Around the area - North East Derbyshire

Case studies

A man from Renishaw came to see us at our Chesterfield office after receiving a JSA sanction. He had failed to take up an employment opportunity as directed by his Jobcentre Work Coach.

The man came to our Chesterfield office for advice and help to challenging the sanction decision. We quickly gathered information and found that the man had health conditions that would impact on his ability to look for work. He had been asked to consider taking up night working – he had diabetes which he was finding difficult to control because of the fluctuation in his blood sugar levels; he was under a specialist Diabetes Nurse.

Thank you for all the help you have given me, without your help I don't think it would have been possible. Thank you for all the time and phone calls you did. You are all a credit.

D.R. Eckington

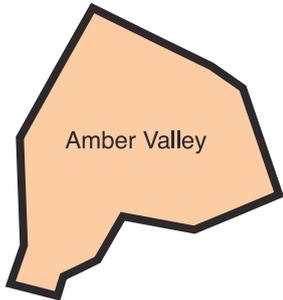
He had tried to explain to the Work Coach the impact night time working would have on his condition. Despite him explaining his situation, a benefit sanction was imposed.

We helped the man challenge the sanction decision; we asked him to obtain medical evidence to support his case that that night-working would be detrimental to his health. He was supported by his Health Care Professionals and subsequently the sanction decision was overturned in his favour.

The man's claimant commitment was later looked at again and amended to include all his health conditions, so possibly preventing any future issues around job search and the kind of work he could undertake.



Around the area - Amber Valley



The swingeing cuts made by the ruling group on Derbyshire County Council have meant that we have had to cut back our outreach provision in Amber Valley.

The Borough Council has not given grant aid to the DUWC since the turn of the Century but

fantastic support from Alfreton Town Council and Somercotes Parish Council has made sure that we continue to work in the North of the Borough. It is with great regret that despite the support of Heanor and Loscoe Town Council we could not continue to provide a service out of Salcare. DUWC has had a presence in Heanor since 1993, first at Salcare's Fletcher St premises and then at their present location on Ray St. Unfortunately, the tribunal work that is generated from this outreach leads to tribunals held in Derby and Nottingham. This stretches our resources to the limit and a small town council grant does not make it viable. We hope to return when Local Authority support eventually returns.

Throughout the year, despite the problems we have represented at 44 tribunals and have 53 waiting to be heard. Our Alfreton office is very well used by local residents and people coming from surrounding areas including those from both North East Derbyshire and Bolsover Districts.



Information stall in Somercotes Village Hall

Around the area - Amber Valley

Case study - Somercotes

Mr. W from Somercotes had been in receipt of Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit for bronchitis and emphysema and was awarded 30%.

He was an ex-miner and was exposed to coal dust on a daily basis. He was then requested to go for a new assessment and for some reason he was awarded 0% for having this chronic illness. We appealed the decision and the Tribunal without hesitation reinstated the original 30%. He is now back in receipt of £52.44 per week and was paid the arrears of £1680

Case study - Alfreton

Ms. S from Alfreton was in receipt of PIP standard daily living/mobility. She was also in receipt of ESA.

She lived alone and because she did not have a carer she was also awarded severe disability premium of £64.30 per week. DWP then sent her a letter stating she had been overpaid her benefit. They said this was because

she had not informed them that she was living in a care home. Ms. S has problems with her mental health and rang DWP to apologise and pay it back. She was also given a fixed penalty fine. Some weeks later, she came into our outreach for a different inquiry. We asked how things were going and it was then that she informed us what had happened. We wrote to DWP and their debt management department to complain and request the money back. Ms. S was still living at the same address that she had for years, it was not a care home in fact it was a house that belonged to the local authority. Several weeks later £2,368.70 was paid back into her account. She has still not had an explanation or apology though.

Case study - Leabrooks

A claimant was in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Due to various mental health issues he was incapable of managing his own affairs and his mother was made his appointee.



No. 1 Rose Hill East

Around the area - Amber Valley

The claimant received a bequest of £10,000 following his father's death. His mother placed this sum in a Building Society savings account for him but failed to notify The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

The DWP carried out an investigation and because of a change in the name of a local building society where the money was held, they formed the opinion that the claimant had twice the funds. As a consequence they stopped payment of the ESA and imposed a penalty for failing to disclose the existence of the savings. Further they demanded repayment of the ESA going back over 18 months.

On his behalf, we asked for the matter to be reconsidered and when this was unsuccessful we appealed the decision to The Social Security Tribunal. We notified the Tribunal Service of our interest and represented the claimant at the tribunal hearing.

We argued that the total funds held by the claimant did not exceed the £16,000 threshold to be entitled to ESA. The Tribunal Judge accepted this and adjourning the

hearing gave the DWP the opportunity to argue that the claimant was not entitled to the whole of the benefit, due to him having funds in excess of the lower threshold of £6,000.

At the reconvened hearing the DWP failed to supply any argument to support a "tariff" deduction in the benefit and ordered that the penalty and demand for repayment of benefit be quashed and the entitlement to full ESA was to be reinstated with any arrears from the date it was stopped.

Just wanted to say a big thank you for the help and support you gave me regarding my husband's PIP Mandatory Reconsideration. We were successful in getting the decision changed and my husband being awarded standard rate.

Sarah, Alfreton

User Feedback Survey 2018

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

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| 0 – 5 minutes | 63 |
| 5 – 15 minutes | 23 |
| 15 – 30 minutes | 13 |
| 30 – 60 minutes | 13 |
| Over 1 hour | 1 |

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.

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

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

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Told by family or friends | 43 |
| Previous use of advice services | 42 |
| Law Centre | 1 |
| CAB | 1 |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Union Representative | 1 |
| Jobcentre Plus | 8 |
| Display sign | 7 |
| Church | 1 |
| Support Worker | 4 |
| Leaflet | 2 |
| Local Knowledge | 3 |

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

| | |
|--|-----|
| Very Happy – excellent service | 105 |
| Satisfied – staff have done their best | 9 |
| 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

Email: info@duwc.org.uk

Monday - Friday: 9.30am - 1.00pm

Brimington

Community Centre, High Street.

Monday: 9.00am - 12noon

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: 10.00am - 12noon

Staveley

Staveley Library, Hall Lane.

Wednesday & Thursday: 9.30am -
12.30pm

Bolsover District

44 Patchwork Row, Shirebrook, NG20

8AL. Tel: 01623 748161

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 - 12noon

Wednesday/Thursday:

9.00am - 12 noon
1.00pm - 4.00pm

Somercotes

Parish Hall, Nottingham Road.

Monday: 1.30pm - 4.00pm

Trustees 2017/2018

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
Reuben Redhead
Nicolo Ferrera
Elaine Tidd

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



Centre Staff 2018

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



Thanks

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



**NATIONAL
LOTTERY FUNDED**

European Union
European
Social Fund

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

