



Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres Annual Report 2021

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What are the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres?

DUWC provides help, advice and representation regarding benefits and credits in north and east Derbyshire with three main offices in Chesterfield, Shirebrook and Alfreton.

The organisation has been delivering its services since 1983 and has an enviable reputation locally, regionally and nationally of delivering consistent, quality and very local services without a single break in provision. The DUWC became a Charity in 2016 with 14 trustees' drawn from a considerable wealth of support and expertise around the 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 addition, it provides a sign-posting service for other services including health, Citizens Advice



and Derbyshire Law Centre. We proactively make our services known to the hardest to reach and most vulnerable within our communities, through target campaigning, local advocates and supporters and via our outreach service which is delivered at 12 separate locations.

The Centres are funded by Chesterfield Borough Council and Bolsover District Council as well as support from the Labour County Councillors through the Community Leadership Scheme. Many Town and Parish Councils give funding as well as Charitable Trusts and local and national fund giving bodies.

Our Staff and Volunteers



This year our wonderful staff and volunteers have dealt with enquiries. We opened our doors straight after the lockdowns ended to make our services accessible to those without internet or credit for phone use. We have gradually opened our outreach offices when safe and given the all clear to do so. The Centre brought in £4,411,773 through our advice work, money that goes in to the local economy helping local business saving and creating jobs.

Unfortunately, this year we have had to release three members of staff through voluntary redundancy, Lynn Bagshaw, Brigit Long, and Glynn Power as the cuts from Conservative led local authorities have taken their toll. Like nearly all of our staff they started off as volunteers and gave great commitment to the organization. We wish them well for the future.

Pictured: staff and volunteers at Bridlington – thanks to The Tudor Trust.



The Chairman writes

As well as being the chair of the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres' trustees I also volunteer for the organisation at Chesterfield, and occasionally Shirebrook. This gives me a rounded view of the work and commitment of the staff and volunteers as well as a first-hand recognition of the issues and predicaments faced by those seeking our services.

The situation is stark for so many who comes through our doors. The benefit system is inadequate and is not providing a safety net, dignity or security. The cut to universal credit, still going ahead at the time of writing, is only going to make matters worse. Advice and representation is necessary and advantageous to people facing adverse decisions regarding the benefit claims but we have to do more than that! If we sit by and watch the people we support become further impoverished without the ability to affect the situation through welfare rights interventions, then we have to help give them a voice. We have to try and assist people in lobbying politicians to give them the help and social security they crave.

It has also been a difficult time for our staff and volunteers. John Knight, who had been a long time staff member and, latterly, a volunteer, died in January. This was a terrible blow as he was also a Trustee of the organisation and we very much valued his experience and wise counsel. John was a great friend to many in and around the Centre and will be missed by us all. Three members of staff have left as a direct result of cuts to our core funding. I, along with my fellow trustees wish them well for the future.

This year, I have seen the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre's at work, close up, and I am proud of what we have achieved together. The evidence of our endeavours is contained within this annual report. All this despite the cuts coming from the local authorities that have changed complexion over the past years. Yes, it has been difficult, but we won't give up.



**Graham Baxter MBE,
Chairman of DUWC's
Trustees**



The Co-ordinator writes

Keeping the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres open and offering help, advice and representation should not be a problem with demand from the many people facing daunting problems in difficult times. However, whereas at one time we could rely on the unstinting support of our local authorities, now our core funding is diminished by short-sighted decision-making by hostile local councils. Hostile because we try to give those on benefits, universal credit and low pay, a voice for their concerns and issues. This is a voice they appear to not want to hear.

Increasingly DUWC is having to rely on external funding from charitable trusts and other funders to be able to fulfil our aims and objectives. These are difficult times but we are resolute. DUWC started with a Portakabin, desk and a kettle so, in the grand scheme of things, today's problems, whilst making life difficult, only serve to make us more determined.

Our achievements this year compare with any over the past four decades. One of our funders, the Henry Smith foundation, told us, on confirming funding for a new project, 'during assessment we

were particularly impressed with the commitment of your team in supporting people, especially during the Covid pandemic.'

We produced a guide to benefits and credits for those made redundant and distributed them through Co-op stores, food banks and food hubs. Our community lottery funded project 'help is here' has been a phenomenal success, exceeding our hopes both in terms of usage and in volunteers from the migrant communities coming forward.

The Tudor Trust Street Talker project has engaged with hundreds of people using our services both in terms of challenging benefit decisions and on the issues concerning universal credit. The Project has given them a voice. These are just a few highlights from an eventful year. I thank the people of Derbyshire that have continued to give us their support.



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

Your Voice Your Rights!

At the beginning of the pandemic DUWC was quick to realise that many people would be losing their jobs or be facing reduced hours or changes in terms and conditions. Many of these would be people who have not had to interact with the statutory organisations concerned with Social Security before.

The first wave of redundancies impacted mostly on young people and they were predominantly female – the hospitality industry bearing the brunt. The DUWC could help with an easily accessible guide. We also, through other funding avenues, developed a new mobile phone friendly website that could also showcase our Guide to benefits and credits following redundancy'. After researching, drafting, producing and printing the Guide the next issue was how to distribute it with many community organisations closing their doors during the pandemic. We contacted the Cooperative stores through their 'pioneers' and secured distribution to the checkouts at all Co-op stores and petrol stations for both the

Central England and Co-op group throughout Chesterfield, Bolsover, North East Derbyshire and Amber Valley. Volunteers rang round all the food banks and food hubs and arranged for the distribution of our Guide to all such venues. Our Facebook page advertised the guide and was shared extensively around the area. As a result of our efforts the idea of the guide was picked up by Worcester Trades Council who used this to produce a national version that was made available to trade councils nationally. Unite the Union also ran with the idea and produced their own version 'accessing benefits support – a Unite community guide'. Hence the work of the DUWC,



Your Voice Your Rights!

with CRT support, has had a far-reaching effect stimulating help and support guides and services throughout the country.

As a result of the Guide and its distribution, marketing and promotion, we picked up many enquiries that would not have taken place. As a result, we were able to help assist and in some cases offer representation support. The Guide was updated in March to take into account the budget changes made by the Chancellor and we have copies available for 2021-22. So the enquiries engendered by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust support will continue through this financial year.

Tudor Trust Street Talker

Benefit Assessment and Appeals Process

By far the largest number of enquiries received by the DUWC is regarding the claiming of benefits for those who are disabled or have health limiting conditions. This process involves making the claim, involving evidence gathering and form filling as well as facing the assessment process.

The assessment has been a bone of contention with hundreds of people over the years telling us that the report emanating from the Healthcare Professional bears no resemblance to what was said or what actually took place

Claimants on being turned down for benefits, if they wish to challenge the decision, face a mandatory reconsideration process and, if that is unsuccessful, an appeal system possibly finishing in a court of law. This is often a stressful and isolating period for people already facing difficulties living with their circumstances and conditions. Individuals have expressed their dismay at the daunting and lengthy undertaking. People have the feeling that this is only happening to them and have no means of talking to others in similar situations.

The street talking project set out to rectify this by creating a community of interest online, and by giving people the opportunity to have an input into the processes that they have been through.

Your Voice Your Rights!

We were able to recruit committed volunteers to help with our endeavours. These volunteers had already, in the past, been through the claiming, assessment and appeals process. Teresa and Elizabeth put together two questionnaires to be used by their peers in order to better illustrate claimants experience of these activities. Our project worker Andrew Parkes, worked with them both to further develop the questionnaires that were then tested on a wider group who



had already experienced the processes. In the meantime, Lynn Bagshaw (pictured) went through the lengthy job of ringing hundreds of people who had contacted DUWC regarding claiming personal Independence payment/employment and support allowance/carer's allowance/attendance

allowance/industrial injuries disablement benefit and had either been successful or who had to challenge the negative decision. During the

pandemic this had many beneficial consequences. We were able to check up if people were okay and whether they needed any help both in terms of benefits advice, or wider help, using our extensive links with voluntary and community organisations in Derbyshire. Around one in five people were helped during the months where these phone calls took place. Many people were glad of the call particularly during the lockdowns and much positive feedback was recorded.

Meanwhile, Andrew sought out additional volunteers with putting the questionnaire into a digital and user friendly form. Paul Eccles and Alison Thwaites supported Andrew in producing the online questionnaire. Alison also produced the reports of the answers – 37 replies were received for the assessment process and 40 for the appeals. Alongside a report that will arise from the experiences of people facing these issues we will also draw on the considerations of our advisors who accompany and represent people via our organisation.



Your Voice Your Rights!

We are currently in the process of finalising the report that we will use to lobby politicians and submit to the HM Tribunal service in order to change the present system for the better, based on those who have first-hand experience of using it. We expect all this to take place by January 1st 2022.

Universal credit £20 uplift

At the beginning of the pandemic the government, following meetings with the trade unions, introduced the furlough scheme and gave a temporary uplift to universal credit payment of £20 per week. The uplift was going to be taken away at the end of March 2021. The rise in universal credit was very substantial for those on low incomes and a lifeline for people facing the pandemic.

The Covid pandemic has exposed the health inequalities in our society with poor people almost twice as likely to die from the virus than the rich. Universal credit claimants include people who are

both in work and out of work as well as those who are unlikely to ever enter the labour market again. These people do not have an effective voice or an easily accessible means of organising together. It is for this reason that we felt the street talker project could be of great assistance.

Again we set about the mammoth task of ringing the hundreds of people that contacted the DUWC since the beginning of the pandemic and established a Facebook group to discuss the proposed cuts to universal credit and collected the emails of all those who wanted to be involved in the campaign. The Facebook group allowed people to share information and to keep connected to the campaign. As a result of our telephone conversations we grouped people together in their respective constituencies. We also asked for people's testimonies as to what the £20 per week meant to them. The Chancellor announced in March that the temporary uplift of universal credit would be extended for six months until the end of September. This gave

Your Voice Your Rights!

people a little longer to organise themselves and plan their campaign.

Following on from this initial detailed work, the street talker project took on a new volunteer, Kathy, who has had a long association with the Centre. Kathy, with support from two other volunteers, began the task of contacting the 160 people identified as wishing to take part in the campaign. As well as being encouraged to join the Facebook group regular emails were sent out and 149 people were involved.

- Writing to MP
- Joining Facebook group
- Sharing campaign on social media
- Attending Day of Action (Derbyshire County Council lobby)
- Lobby of Chesterfield Borough Council
- Sand Art Action at Bridlington (see later)
- Visit to local MPs (Amber Valley and Bolsover)

Our street talker project was also stronger for linking with others both regionally and nationally.

Sand Art

Together with campaigners in Yorkshire we came up with the idea of commissioning sand art on Bridlington beach in August. It is always difficult to think of newsworthy actions involving families facing poverty without putting undue stress on parents and children. Our group liked the idea of having a 100m x 26m £20 note on the beach utilising families to write their message to the government – filmed by drone. Once the decision was made to commit to this action we set about organising. www.sandinyoureye.co.uk were commissioned.

We made contact with Gussie's kitchen/pantry, a local food aid community organisation. They have queues of families seeking help from the St Augustine's / Birdholme / Boythorpe and Grangewood area of Chesterfield. We also made contact with Syrian refugee families in Chesterfield and requested their support in this venture.

Both groups gave their full backing to the Bridlington sand art action.

Your Voice Your Rights!



A line in the sand at Bridlington?

On Wednesday, the 26th of August we set out with 80 people from Chesterfield made up of families on universal credit, refugees, and volunteers for the street talking project. More families from Yorkshire came to the event and following the marking out of the area on Bridlington South Beach, the huge sand £20 note spelling out CANCEL THE CUT was created. Families were invited to write their own messages to the Chancellor. As the tide came in the £20 note was washed away and filmed by

drone. The aim of the Bridlington sand art action was to gain a national profile to our lobbying. We wanted to link the work being carried out by North Derbyshire universal credit claimants to the wider national stage.

The event certainly did this being covered by BBC breakfast and 6 o'clock news as well as national newspaper coverage. The standard action was also later copied by groups in Wales (Rotherslade Bay) and Scotland (Irvine).



Help is here – Pomoc jest tutaj

Over the past year of our migrant advice project, Joanna and Marcin have managed to build the trust between the local migrant communities and can proudly say, they believe somebody is standing by them.

There are new clients coming all the time, we see that they are from further afield and are no longer necessarily affiliated with Shirebrook through Sports Direct and this is happening mostly by widely spreading the word from mouth to mouth. We also linked with the local Polish Community Association which helped to promote our service and identify people's needs. An outreach was opened at The Crossing in Worksop as we were receiving a large number of enquiries from that area.

The Project has helped 280 unique individuals this year and dealt with 963 enquiries on a range of issues – from Settled Status issues, Employment, Benefits and Credits as well as Pensions. Links with local organisations have meant that no-one is turned away. Domestic violence, food poverty,

and other charitable assistance, as well as health, including mental health enquiries are being encountered. Derbyshire Law Centre have been on hand to support our clientele with employment, debt, housing and immigration matters. Joanna and Marcin (pictured) can say with all confidence, that most of our DLC-referenced clients would not have benefited from their services without our intermediation, simply due to lack of knowledge about their services.

We also help in seemingly simple matters such as opening a bank account, paying a fine, changing the gas or internet supplier or place the a school admission application.



Help is here – Pomoc jest tutaj

Three volunteers have supported our work this year undergoing training

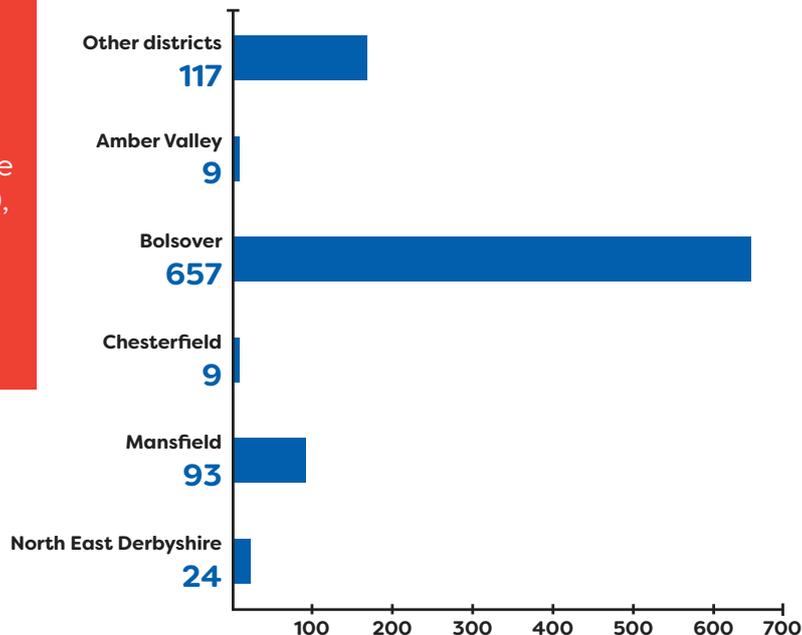
Anna Ligeza – She has been volunteering for us since June 2021, she speaks Polish and English.

Alena Kupcova – Slovakian national, she became a volunteer in September 2020, she speaks Slovakian, Czech, Polish and English.

Ala Zon – Polish National, speaks fluent English and Polish.

Issue Origins

October 8th 2021



Help is here – Pomoc jest tutaj

Financial Awards

October 1st 2021 – September 30th 2021

Lead Issue	Arrears paid	Benefit	Compensation	Debt written off	Grant	Other
Child benefit	£1,637.70	£179	0	0	0	0
Child Disability Living Allowance	£298.50	£59.70	0	0	0	0
Council tax reduction	£897.77	£137.45	0	0	0	0
Derbyshire Discretionary Fund	0	0	0	0	£56	0
Employment and Support Allowance	£3,019.94	£514.56	0	0	0	0
Other	£5,176.93	£5,054.19	0	£29.91	£2,811.27	£8,558.50
Personal Independence Payment	£38,754.85	£1,198.10	0	0	0	0
State Pension	£1,651	£206.50	0	£3,182	0	0
Statutory Maternity Pay	£5,260.04	0	0	0	0	0
Statutory Sick Pay	£1,047.59	0	0	0	0	0
Universal credit	£3,444.52	£5,147.29	0	0	0	0
TOTAL AWARDS	£61,188.84	£12,497.69	0	£3,211.91	£2,867.27	£8,558.50

Money Sorted

The 'Money Sorted in D2N2' project has been such a success that it has been extended until March 2023. It 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 to build confidence and improve their money management skills.

The route back to the job market is one that often requires a holistic approach to the issues that individuals face on that journey, something which has been further complicated due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Our 'Personal Navigator' John Power (pictured) has already helped and supported 137 people through the Money Sorted Programme.



Our Funders 2021

Local Authorities

- Chesterfield Borough Council
- Amber Valley Borough Council
- Bolsover District Council

Parish And Town Councils

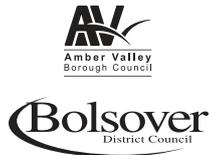
- Alfreton Town
- Ault Hucknall
- Belper Town
- Brimington Parish
- Clay Cross Parish
- Clowne Parish
- Grassmoor Parish
- Heanor and Loscoe Town
- North Wingfield Parish

- Pinxton Parish
- Pilsley Parish
- Pleasley
- Scarcliffe Parish
- Shirebrook Town
- Somercotes Parish
- Sutton cm Duckmanton Parish
- Tibshelf
- Warsop Parish

Grants And Donations

- Community Lottery Fund
- Alex Ferry Foundation
- Henry Smith
- The Tudor Trust

- Derbyshire One Fund For All
- Money Sorted in D2N2 – European Social Fund – Big Lottery Fund
- Unite East Midlands Region
- Numerous Unite Industrial Branches
- GMB – Yorks and N.Derbyshire
- GMB Chesterfield Holding Branch
- Thompsons Solicitors
- Graysons Solicitors
- Grassland Hasmoor Futures
- Anonymous Charitable Donations



Statistics

Appeal Totals

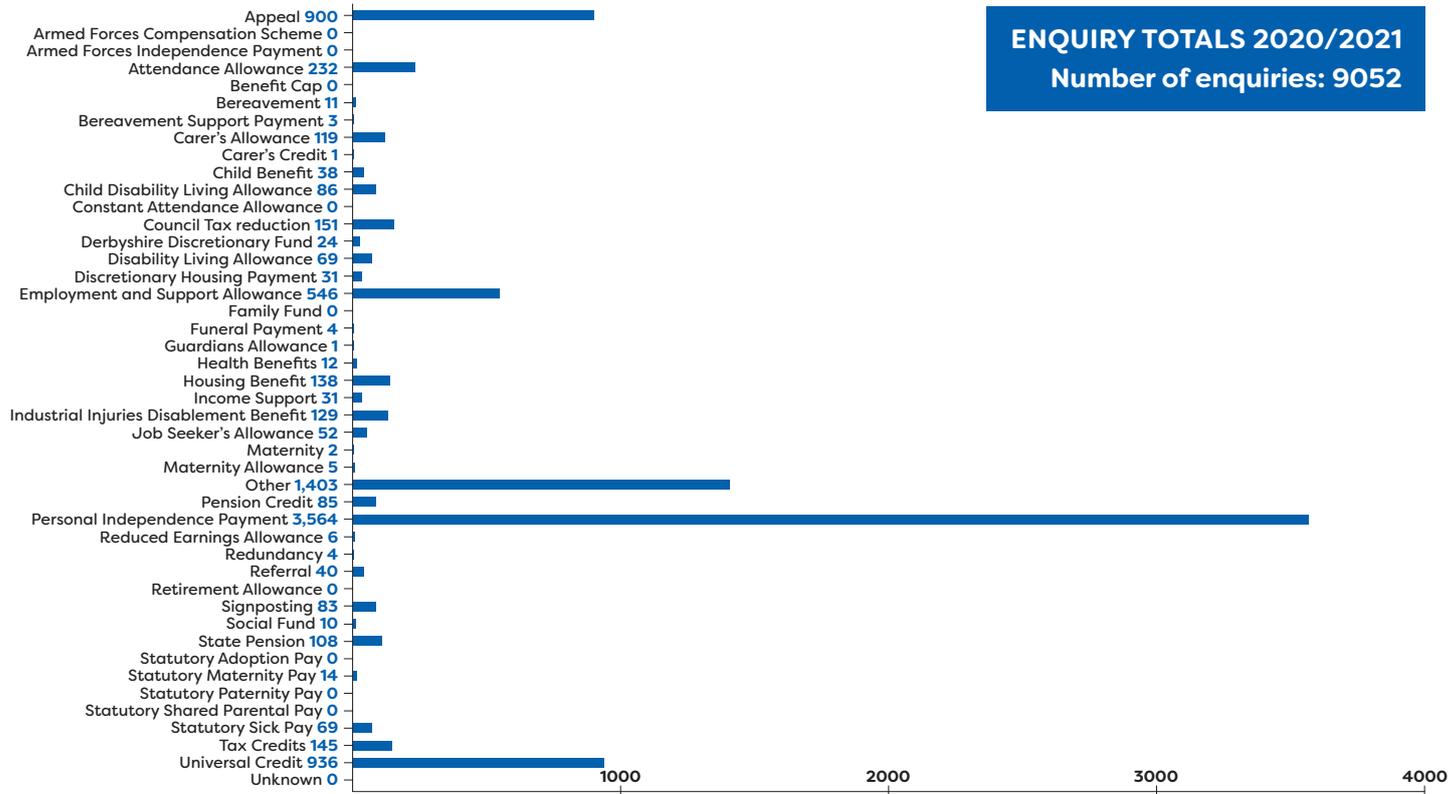
1st October 2020 – September 30th 2021

Lead Issue	Abandoned	Pending	Completed	Arrears amount	Weekly amount
Attendance Allowance	0	2	3	£4,999.20	£149.10
Bereavement	0	1	0	0	0
Carer's allowance	1	2	0	0	0
Child Disability Living Allowance	2	1	4	£283.40	£70.80
Council tax reduction	1	0	0	0	0
Disability Living Allowance	1	1	1	£4,356.90	£59.70
Employment and Support Allowance	12	5	15	£42,755.39	£437.09
Housing benefit	4	0	1	£1,505.25	£55.75
Income support	1	0	3	£936.02	0
Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit	1	3	5	£2,984.00	£36.40
Job Seeker's Allowance	0	1	0	0	0
Other	1	0	0	0	0
Personal Independence Payment	50	134	212	£827,836.53	£16,114.49
Tax credits	0	2	2	0	0
Universal credit	11	13	11	£28,157.64	£409.56
TOTALS	85	165	257	£913,814.33	£17,332.89

As a result of these tribunals, the following amounts were awarded: Lump Sum Arrears: £913,814. Ongoing Weekly Benefits: £17,332. (over a year this equals £901,310). In 2021, general enquiries and take-up work resulted in payments of £2,596,649 for Derbyshire Residents. **During this year this has meant a total of £4,411,773 has been won through our advice and representation services.**

Statistics - Enquiry Issues (enquiries and case work)

November 11th 2021

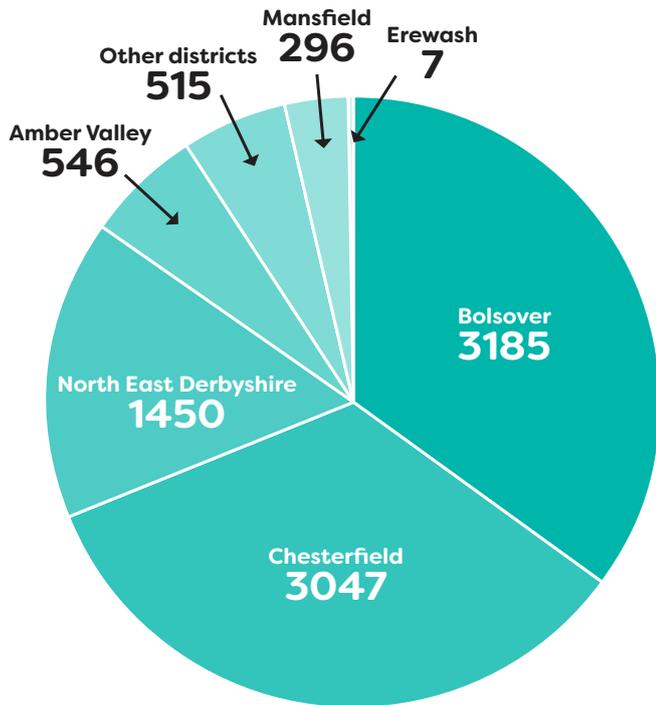


Statistics

October 1st 2020 – September 30th 2021



ORIGIN OF ENQUIRIES



Unique Service Requests

Home Visits
6

Telephone enquiries
3,234

Email and Facebook
96

In Person
1,759



Around the area – Chesterfield



Outreach officers are back up and running at Hasland and Brimington. Due to the pandemic Staveley library has not been taking room bookings so we have been unable to operate our twice-weekly service in the town. It is likely that we will be back in November 2021 on Mondays and Thursday mornings.

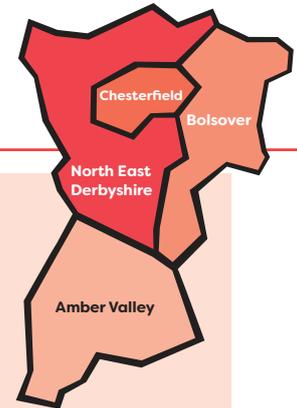


We will also be working closely with Gussie's kitchen to make sure that help is on hand for anyone needing advice who uses their services. During this year we have opened our doors as soon as it has been possible as we are aware that not everyone is able or willing to use remote access to services. During this period we saw many people who are desperate for support, sometimes with issues outside of our competence. With our long experience the majority of people were given assistance either by us or through complimentary services with which we have established links.

Case study – Brimington

A man from Brimington came to see us at our Brimington outreach in the Community Centre as his wife had been diagnosed with a serious long term degenerative illness. He had left work to be able to care for her. Hence, this has had a negative financial impact. He requested advice on what they may be able to claim.

Our Adviser helped him to complete an Attendance Allowance claim form on behalf of his wife. He was awarded £60 weekly. Additionally, our advisor advised him to claim Carer's Allowance with the Carer's Premium. This gave him an extra £97 weekly, allowing him to care for his wife without the need to look for work. We additionally advised that he applied for a Council Tax Reduction and a Blue badge.



Around the area – Chesterfield

Case study – Grangewood

A Grangewood man came into our Chesterfield office. He had a mandatory reconsideration notice with him which was over seven months old. The man had been awarded 0 points for daily living on Personal Independence Payment (PIP). He had previously been awarded 19 points

for daily living giving him the enhanced rate. As he had been sent to prison, the adverse response to his PIP claim had been posted to the prison and was not forwarded on to his address for seven months.



Our advisor helped him put in a late SSCS1 Appeal where the time limit is usually one month to submit a challenge to a decision. This was accepted without recourse to Tribunal and the man was awarded enhanced daily living of £89.60 per week and arrears of £3,105 paid.

“I won my PIP appeal, thanks for all your help, I don’t know what I would do without you all”

T.C. Chesterfield

“Many many thanks over the years for all your hard work and dedication to a special cause.”

A.K. Newbold

Pictured: Brigit Long

Around the area – Bolsover



Our extended opening hours at Shirebrook have helped our accessibility to local people. The Clowne and Creswell outreach sessions have been well attended since reopening in the summer of 2021. Again, because the libraries have not been taking room bookings, we have not been able to resume

our service out of Bolsover library. We expect to be back in November 2021. In the mean-time people from Bolsover have had to access our advice services in Chesterfield, Shirebrook or Clowne.

The Pinxton outreach has now reopened at the village centre that is also an inoculation centre. We have changed our opening times to Monday mornings and it is already well used through advertising and word-of-mouth.



We have also been asked to consider setting up an outreach session in the Pleasley / New Houghton area. This will take place at the New Houghton Community Hub on Rotherham Rd. With the fantastic support of Bolsover District Council we will endeavour to expand our outreach programme in the district but we are concerned not to overstretch our ability to provide advice services.

“Thank you for your assistance in my successful application for PIP.”

D.H. Bolsover

“I am very happy with the service provided. I will recommend to everybody from the bottom of my heart.”

L.M. Shirebrook

Around the area – Bolsover

Case study

A woman from Palterton in the Bolsover District rang up regarding her State pension. She was over the state pension age at this time.

She asked about claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for mobility. She said that she thought she had mobility but was not receiving it. After making enquiries into her case we found out that she had been awarded enhanced mobility at her Tribunal, but had never been paid the arrears or the ongoing weekly payments of enhanced mobility.

After several attempts to resolve this via contacting PIP and the Tribunal service. The issue had to be escalated to the

partnership management team. After several calls from the DWP the issue has now been resolved.

There was a further issue – the award had only been awarded for three years and the award had run out. A further call to the DWP case manager confirmed this but again following our intervention the award was extended for an ongoing period, meaning the award should not be looked at until 2031.

Arrears of £12,764 was paid into the claimant's bank account this for the period from 2017 to 2021. Ongoing payments of £62.55 per week are now being paid.

Around the area – Bolsover

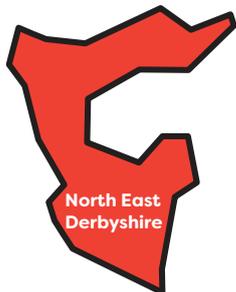
Case study

A couple from Clowne attended our outreach in the Community Centre. They were claiming Universal Credit (UC) and had noticed that their most recent payment had reduced with no warning. We accessed their UC journal and identified that a large amount was being recovered due to an overpayment of tax credits. This reduction in their payments led to issues with bills and them needing to request help from a foodbank.

We contacted DWP debt management and were told that tax credits had requested recovery of an historic overpayment and the amount outstanding was over £5000. We then contacted Tax credits intermediary line

and were told the overpayment related to three separate tax years 2013,2014 and 2015. Tax Credits compliance team had retrospectively amended their award due to them separating as a couple. However, the issue with this decision was that they had never separated. We were able to provide Tax Credits with this information and remove the overpayments. Despite having all the information requested it took another 2 months for the issue to be resolved. We have raised a complaint with tax credits in how they have handled this case and are awaiting any news on possible compensation.

Around the area – North East Derbyshire



The decision of the Conservative led council to withdraw the grant to DUWC from April 2021 was bound to have an effect on our services. North East Derbyshire District Council had previously given consistent support to the unemployed workers centre since the late 1980s. As a result of the

cut we have had to stop our outreach services at Clinton where the Conservative controlled parish council also stopped our small grant. We no longer operate out of the business centre on Market Street and people have to travel to Chesterfield to access face-to-face services.

We would like to thank Grassmoor, North Wingfield and Clay Cross Parish Council for their tremendous support. Due to the District Council cuts and the corresponding staff redundancies we have been, as yet, unable to resume our outreach services in the south of the district.

“Thank you for all your help in winning my appeal. Please accept a donation. I wish it could be more. Once again thank you so much for all your help.”

J.H. Old Tupton

“Thank you for attending my PIP court hearing with my mum and I. Knowing you were there to support me was a great comfort.”

R.L.B. North Wingfield

We have, however, been helping, advising and representing people throughout North East Derbyshire from the nearest available office, on the phone or online.

Pictured: Katrina Hudson



Around the area – North East Derbyshire

Case study

Our Personal Navigator on our Money Sorted Project has been working with a couple from Holmeigate for a number of years. This has included a two-year long universal credit issue which was eventually resolved in their favour.

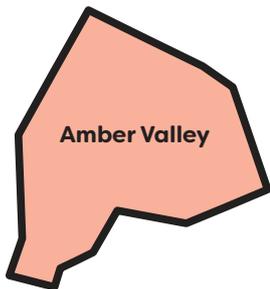
Alongside this he has been assisting them with a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claim. The woman had attempted to claim PIP on two previous occasions but had struggled to engage with the process due to learning disabilities. This had resulted in both claims failing and a reluctance to try again.

We discussed making a new claim and offered our help throughout the process. We helped make the claim and complete the assessment form. Again, she was refused after a PIP telephone assessment and did not want to

continue with any challenge or appeal. We talked to her and her family outlining the reasons why we felt it should be challenged and they agreed for us to request that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) look again at the decision. This was also refused despite medical evidence supporting the claim.

We submitted an appeal based on the initial evidence provided to the DWP at the start of the claim. This evidence had been submitted to the DWP for both previous claims, as well as the most recent one. At the tribunal, the Judge, doctor and disability member of the appeal panel agreed that medical evidence indicated significant impairment and awarded the highest rate of PIP and ultimately a £7,927 in arrears and a weekly award of £122.55 for an ongoing period.

Around the area – Amber Valley



Our main Alfreton office has changed opening hours. We are now open all day Tuesdays and Wednesdays as well as on Thursday afternoons. We are very grateful to the supporting town and parish councils in Heanor,

Alfreton, Belper and Somercotes. With Belper library still not accepting bookings our services have had to be delivered remotely for the most part in that area. We are back open in Somercotes and Heanor with the usage slowly recovering after the problems of the pandemic with many people still shying away from face-to-face services.

The benefits guide for those made redundant during the pandemic has been distributed widely in the area through food banks and Co-op stores. We have also used our advertising

“Just wanted to say a BIG THANKYOU for all your help and hard work with my appeal. Wishing you all the best and hope the good work continues.”

M.A. Alfreton

“Thank you all for your hard work and everything you have done for me, help with form filling etc. Keep up the good work that you do.”

M.L. Heanor

to encourage more elderly people to look at whether they are missing out on attendance allowance (AA). Many people worry about means testing but AA does not require any details of an individual financial situation.



Around the area - Amber Valley

Y

I want to tell you how much I really appreciated your help.

The money you gave me was spent on food and the rest went towards my utility bills.

I was in a very dark & vulnerable position at that time, very depressed.

But look at me now you have helped me be stronger I have now re-built my life.

I am now in receipt of PIPs which has helped me with private meetings with the osteopath.

I² also have a job which I am really enjoying this is topped up with Universal Credit (UC) but its still a couple of hundred pounds per month, so as you can see Im doing well.

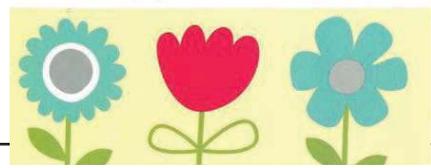
I would therefore like to donate the £1000 pounds back to you for someone else who may be in a similar position to what I was in.

This is of course to be anonymous. you can tell them my story but not my name.

I was determined to get a job and I succeeded even with the Covid environment. Thank you from the bottom of my heart xx



I will never forget your generosity



Obituaries

John Knight

6/7/1949 – 23/1/2021



In January this year our long time friend, colleague and trustee John Knight died at the age of 71. John was born in Chesterfield and on leaving school had a host of jobs ranging from working in a chicken factory to joining the permanent way gang with British Rail. At the age of 23 he entered the

Derbyshire League cricket record books taking 9-0 in 4.3 overs for Old Whittington CC with his left arm seam bowling. He secured a job at Flogates Engineering at Sheepbridge where he rose to be the AEUW shop steward. After leaving engineering in the mid 1980s following illness he volunteered

at the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres (DUWC) becoming the full-time fundraiser. He went on to head up the Trades Council's Trade Union Safety Committee and oversaw the help and advice given to workers following industrial accidents and disease. In 2002 he was the driving force behind setting up the Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team. On retiring he served in a voluntary capacity while his health allowed. John took the position of vice chair of the DUWC and gave great support to staff, volunteers and the causes of the organisation. He died after contracting Covid and a short spell in the Intensive Care Unit at the Royal Hospital. John was well-liked and respected in the workplace and in the wider community. John was a polite, caring and genuine man. In his spare time, for many years he was the secretary of the Chesterfield Tipton Park Municipal Golf Club and would have been the first pick to join any quiz team. A wonderful raconteur, he brought warmth and humour to any setting. He will be missed both as a friend and campaigner.

User Feedback Survey 2021

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

0-5 mins	68
5-15 mins	16
15-30 min	12
30-60 min	6
Over 1 Hour	0

Each individual was asked if they would use our service again. 102 said they would. **100% positive**

Each individual was asked if they would recommend us to someone else who was in need of benefits or credit advice. 102 said they would. **100% positive**

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

Family/friends	50
Previous Visit	25
Law Centre	0
CAB	4
Local Council	4

Jobcentre	5
Sign outside	2
Mental Health	2
No comment	5
MP	2
Poster	3
Facebook	0

Each person was asked how they felt about our service.

Very Happy	75
Satisfied	12
Dissatisfied	0
Very Unhappy	0
None of above	15

Comments

- “Very helpful and friendly service.”
- “Excellent service, thank you so much for your help.”
- “This service is vital.”
- “The staff and service are excellent.”
- “If I won the lottery I would fund this service.”



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 – 12 Noon

Hasland

Hasland Hub, The Working Men's
Club, Hampton St
Wednesday 1.00pm – 3.30pm

Staveley

Staveley Library, Hall Lane
Tuesday and Thursday
9.30am – 12.00pm

Bolsover District

44 Patchwork Row,
Shirebrook NG20 8AL
Tel: 01623 748161

Monday, Tues, Weds
9am – 11.30am and 1pm – 4pm

Thursday, Friday
9am – 11.30am

Bolsover

Bolsover Library, Church Street
Tuesday 9.30am – 12.00am

Clowne

Community Centre,
Recreation Close,
Wednesday 1.00pm – 3.30pm

Creswell

Limestone House, Elmton Road
Thursday 1.00pm – 3.30pm

New Houghton

Community Hub, Rotherham Rd
Thursday 10.00am – 12noon

Pinxton

Village Hall, Kirkstead Road
Monday 9.00am – 11.30am

Amber Valley

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

Heanor

Heanor Town Hall, Buxton Room
Thursday 9.00am – 11:30am

Somercotes

Parish Hall, Nottingham Road
Monday 1.30pm – 4.00pm

Belper (opening soon!)

Belper Library, Derwent St
Call 01773 832237 for details

Check our website for updates.

Trustees 2020/2021

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

- Graham Baxter
- Ian Rutledge
- John Knight (deceased January 2021)
- Hilary Cave
- Cllr. Mary Kerry
- Nicolo Ferrera
- Elaine Tidd
- Cllr. Amanda Serjeant
- Christine Smith
- Sarah Roy
- Angela Webster
- Cllr. Mary Dooley
- Bethany Holt
- Steve Marshall-Clark
- Joe Knight (joined March 2021)

Centre Staff 2021

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Colin Hampton | - Co-ordinator |
| Andy Parkes | - Assistant Co-ordinator/
Welfare Rights Advisor |
| Katrina Hudson | - Welfare Rights Advisor |
| Tim Wilkinson | - Welfare Rights Advisor |
| John Power | - Welfare Rights Advisor |
| Paul Marklew | - Welfare Rights Advisor |
| Karen Seymour | - Welfare Rights Advisor |
| Joanna Zon | - Co-ordinator 'Help is Here Project' |
| Marcin Proc | - Administrator 'Help is Here Project' |

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

Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres are funded by Chesterfield Borough Council, Bolsover 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.

