



Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres Annual Report 2024

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What do we stand for?

Over the 41 years of our existence there cannot be many people in Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire, Bolsover and Amber Valley who have not had a family member or friend that has been touched by unemployment, redundancy, ill health or disability meaning that they have needed advice, help or representation. Many of them will have accessed our services at our main offices or through our outreach sessions.

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 16 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, DUWC provides a sign-posting service for other services including health, Citizens Advice and the Derbyshire Law Centre. We proactively make our services known to the hardest to reach and most

vulnerable within our communities, through targeted campaigning, local advocates and supporters and via our outreach service which is delivered at 15 separate locations. Our three main offices are in Chesterfield, Alfreton and Shirebrook.

How are we funded?

The Centres are funded by Chesterfield Borough Council and Bolsover District Council, North East Derbyshire District Council and Amber Valley Borough Council as well as support from the DCC 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. Many local people donate to DUWC, making sure that the organisation is here for them and for others.

Staff and Volunteers

All our paid Welfare Rights advisers started as volunteers and have displayed a huge commitment to the organisation. Together with our volunteers they have brought in £6,263,300 to the local economy in lump sums, additional weekly payments from benefits gained or

recovered. They have made a massive difference to many lives and some of those we help become volunteers.



Susie Bennett and Esther Fisher have joined DUWC as Assistant Co-ordinators and brought a new range of skills and experience to our team.

Lyndsey Nicholls and Joanne Johnson are working on our Trussell Trust Foodbank Project in South Normanton and Alfreton.

A number of new volunteers have joined our ranks this year. They join our team of volunteer advisers. Special thanks to Shirley Peirson and Allison Jarvis at Shirebrook and Colin Bennett at Alfreton, Heanor, Belper and Graham Baxter and Ann Lambert in Chesterfield. Our Help is Here project has many volunteers and they are acknowledged elsewhere in this report.

Andy Salt, Ann Lambert, Nazneen Zaidi, Ray Carpenter, Isabelle Howley and Martin Rutter are valued volunteers and DUWC places on record our thanks to our wonderful team.

If you are interested in volunteering with DUWC contact Colin Hampton, via colin.hampton@duwc.org.uk or 07870 387999.



The Chairman writes

When the unemployed workers centres were set up over 40 years ago, by the stalwarts of the local trade union movement in association with Councillor Bill Flanagan and the Chesterfield Borough Council, no one expected the organisation to be around for very long. In fact, the staff were expected to work themselves out of a job! However, the situation for people not in work has become decidedly worse over the decades and our services are overstretched.

Our commitment to full employment and an end to poverty with Social Security giving dignity for all remains as solid as ever, but the road ahead is never going to be easy. That is why it is important to maintain an active and vibrant DUWC to serve our communities. The support of Local Authorities gives us a democratic accountability and keeps a channel of communication allowing us to inform politicians of the issues facing those who need social security. I cannot emphasise enough how important this is.

I volunteer two days per week at the Chesterfield, HQ and see first-hand both the dedication of the staff and volunteers, as well as the difficult

circumstances facing those that use our services. All our Centres and outreaches are busy and providing accessible services across the north and the east of the county is a challenge to deliver. Many organisations have abandoned outreach work and localised provision, often under financial constraints, resorting to telephony and on-line provision. This may make organisations life easier and cheaper at the cost of excluding many from help, support, advice and information. For DUWC to continue in the future, we need your support. Please spread the word by sharing this report, consider volunteering, and support our work in giving your voice to the powerless. DUWC operates many projects and throughout, maintains a commitment to the aims and objects that have served us well over 40 years. Our organisation is deeply rooted in the communities in which we operate. Whilst there is a need for our team we will endeavour to meet the challenge.



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



The Co-ordinator writes

In early 2023, Janet Wilson and Kate Alvey, veterans of the Chesterfield Women's Action Group approached me to help mark the 40th anniversary of the great 84-85 miners strike, making sure that the woman's role on the picket line, fundraising, and feeding the miners' families would be properly recognised. They kindly gave me the archive of the Women's Action Group activities over that momentous year. DUWC was active in helping Miners' families at that time.

This gave me the idea to stage an exhibition.

Outside of the Second World War and the Covid epidemic the miners' strike affected more lives in North Derbyshire than anything else in the last century. So I pursued the idea of an exhibition. Chesterfield Borough Council kindly donated the Assembly Rooms for a month and the museum service loaned us the plinths and mannequins.

People asked – why commemorate a strike where the men went back without agreement? Well there is only one community in the world that could sustain a strike for a whole year and that is a mining community. And that solidarity and community must be celebrated and commemorated.

I started work at the DUWC during the strike in January 1985. I have witnessed the aftermath as the government closed Pit after Pit.

Within 10 years, all the pits were closed in Derbyshire.

And what are we left with? The children and grandchildren of miners' families face precarious, low paid, sometimes unsafe work, in unorganised workplaces. Even these places are a step up from the hostile environments, faced by people who have to interface with the DWP.

The exhibition is now on tour and I hope you will be able to take a look. It is not just a nostalgic look back at the past, although there is lots to be nostalgic about, it is an appeal to revive that solidarity and community. In recent times we have witnessed politicians trying to divide us – but remember – miners tell me when they went onto the streets collecting money all over the country for the strike, people came forward to give: men, women, young, old, lesbian, gay, straight, black, white, Christian, Muslim, Jew and Hindu. They all chucked into the bucket because they knew that if the miners could be broken, then everyone was vulnerable.

The DUWC and the journey of the mining industry in Derbyshire are inextricably linked. We need to rekindle that sense of community and solidarity to work towards a better world for the future.



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

Hello from our new management team

Hello from Susie...

Esther and I (we jobshare the Assistant Co-ordinator job) started at DUWC around last Christmas – so we've managed to survive for nearly a year. I'm really happy to be working somewhere that helps benefit claimants and other low income groups, especially in such a difficult political and economic climate where people can really be struggling and we can see the difference we're making every day. It's a great place to work, with interesting and inspiring people who really live their values: despite how it may seem, I don't just keep coming back for the biscuits (or Ann's cakes). I hope to be here for the foreseeable!



Susie Bennett

And hello from Esther...

Hi, I was so pleased to join the team at DUWC in January of this year. I have worked in benefits advice since 2011 and always felt the work Colin and the team do is of so much importance and value. I have loved getting involved with the Miners' Strike exhibition work and helping to organise our involvement in the May Day event. There is never a dull moment here at the centre and I am enjoying learning new things each day. Can't wait for 2025!



Esther Fisher

Our Funders 2024

Local Authorities

- Chesterfield Borough Council
- Bolsover District Council
- Amber Valley Borough Council
- North East Derbyshire District Council
- Derbyshire County Council Members Community Leadership

Parish and Town Councils

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

- Grassmoor Parish
- Heanor and Loscoe Town
- Heath and Holmewood Parish Council
- North Wingfield Parish
- Pinxton Parish
- Pleasley Parish
- Shirebrook Town
- Somercotes Parish
- South Normanton Parish
- Sutton cm Duckmanton Parish
- Warsop Parish

Grants and Donations

- Community Lottery Fund
- Alex Ferry Foundation
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- CISWO

- Henry Smith
- Derbyshire One Fund For All
- Unite East Midlands Region
- Unite De58 Branch
- GMB Chesterfield Holding Branch
- GMB East Midlands Region
- Thompsons Solicitors
- Graysons Solicitors
- Grassland Hasmoor Futures
- Anonymous Charitable Donations
- North Derbyshire Miners Welfare Trust
- Trussell Trust



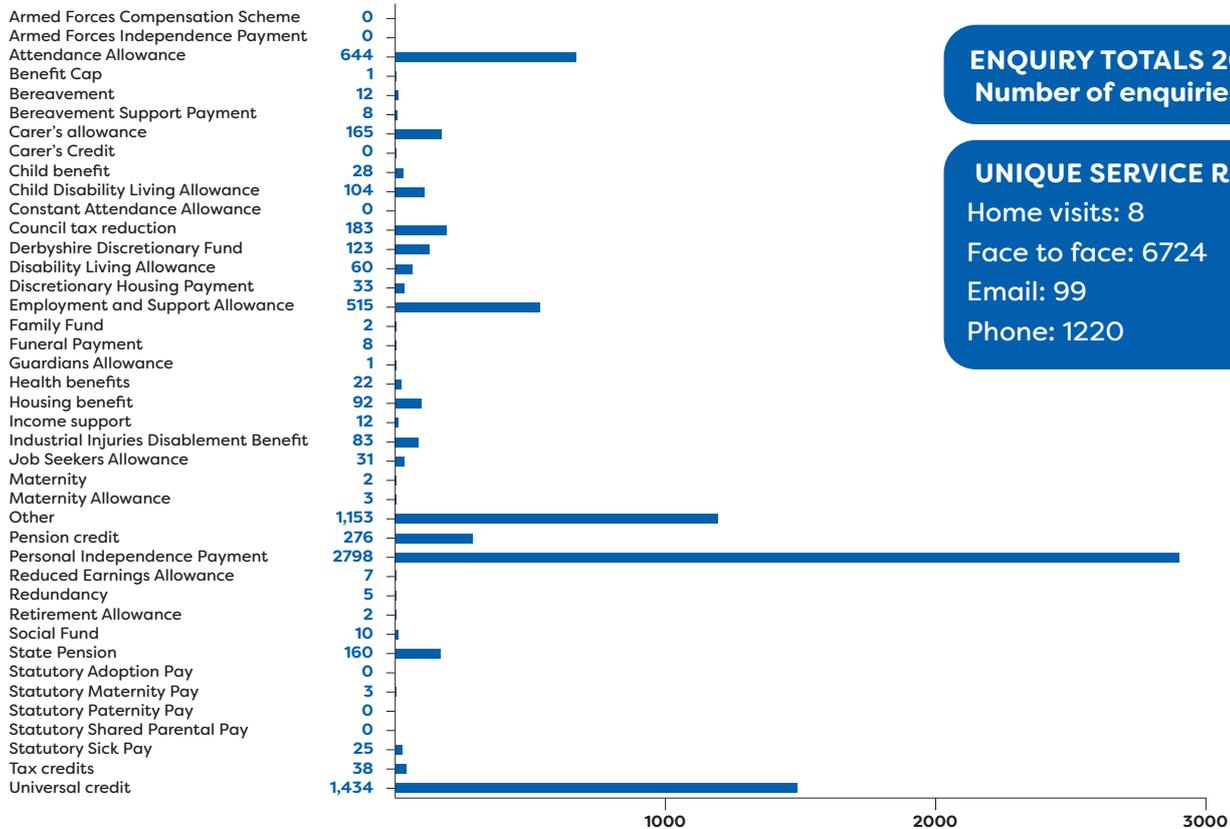
Statistics – Appeals totals

| Lead Issue | Abandoned | Pending | Completed | Arrears amount | Weekly amount |
|---|-----------|------------|------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Attendance Allowance | 11 | 21 | 7 | £10,475.90 | £412.35 |
| Bereavement | 0 | 1 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Carers allowance | 1 | 1 | 2 | £6,865.20 | £81.90 |
| Child Disability Living Allowance | 2 | 8 | 1 | £2,345.00 | £33.65 |
| Council tax reduction | 0 | 1 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Derbyshire Discretionary Fund | 0 | 1 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Disability Living Allowance | 0 | 1 | 2 | £1,504.00 | £47.00 |
| Employment and Support Allowance | 1 | 14 | 16 | £17,788.30 | £607.00 |
| Housing benefit | 0 | 1 | 1 | £556.00 | £0.00 |
| Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit | 1 | 3 | 2 | £2,491.20 | £41.52 |
| Job Seekers Allowance | 0 | 1 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Pension credit | 0 | 3 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Personal Independence Payment | 50 | 302 | 168 | £856,556.51 | £16,838.71 |
| State Pension | 1 | 1 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Universal credit | 6 | 50 | 34 | £74,940.17 | £2,003.63 |
| Totals | 73 | 409 | 233 | £973,522.28 | £20,065.76 |

As a result of these tribunals the following amounts were awarded: lump sum arrears £973,522. Ongoing weekly benefits £20,065 (over a year equals £1,043,420). In 2024, general enquiries and take-up work resulted in payments of £4,246,358 for Derbyshire residents. **During this year that has meant a total of £6,263,300 has been won through our advice and representation services across our core work and projects.**



Statistics – Enquiry Issues (excludes case work)

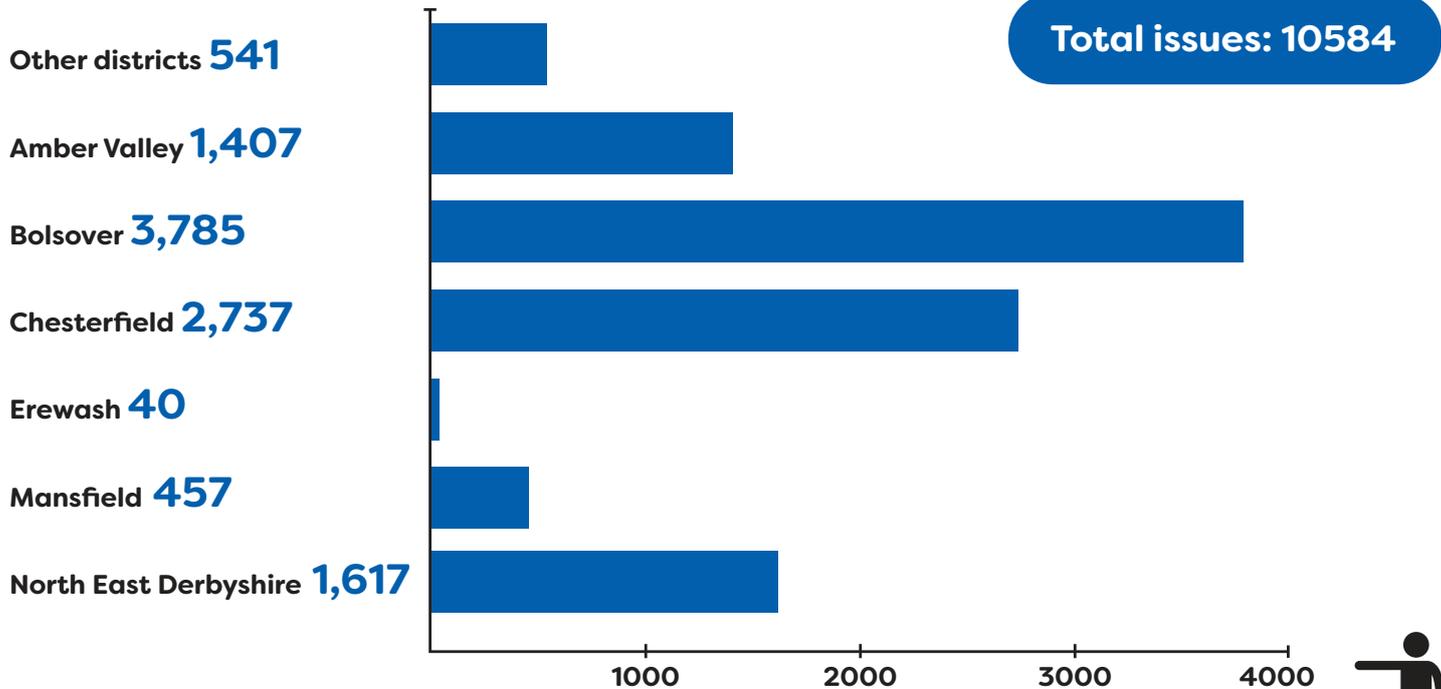


ENQUIRY TOTALS 2023/24
 Number of enquiries: 7192

UNIQUE SERVICE REQUESTS
 Home visits: 8
 Face to face: 6724
 Email: 99
 Phone: 1220

Statistics – Issue Origins

October 1st 2023 – September 30th 2024



Trussell Trust



As an established provider of benefits advice and support in Amber Valley and Bolsover DUWC was asked to deliver a Trussell Trust funded project as part of their Financial Inclusion Programme, where we work with the South Normanton foodbank to provide benefits advice. This is to help address the reasons why people are having to use foodbanks in the first place and make sure everyone who uses the foodbank has the opportunity to see someone to make sure they're receiving support and their full benefit entitlement.

The project is delivered in South Normanton and Alfreton. Our Trussell Trust funded workers work with the staff and volunteers at the foodbank who refer and signpost people to them for benefit checks, help with applications, and support to tribunal if necessary.

It's been very successful; in 23-24 we managed to gain almost £42,000 in benefit arrears for clients with a further £47,847 in ongoing benefits payments. We were also able to help with getting debts written off for clients, with reductions in council tax, or with grants from the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund and awards from the Severn Trent Water Big Difference Scheme.

Feedback from clients has been overwhelmingly positive, with people saying how helpful our advisers have been. Lyndsey (pictured top), the first adviser to work on the project, was joined in March 24 by Jo (pictured bottom) when we were awarded funding for an additional role, increasing our capacity. We look forward to working with the foodbank again in 24-25!



Work with former Mineworkers

During the last twelve months we have dealt with enquiries from 155 unique former mineworkers and partners/widows with 333 separate enquiries. We have represented at 11 tribunal appeals with 18 pending. This has brought in £36,570.56 in lump sum payments and £41,450.76 in annualized weekly additional payments at the time of this report.

The main issues that have been dealt with by our advisers have been Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance, Universal Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, Carers Allowance and Pension Credit. Our take up work around enquiries harvested at the Exhibition and tour has gained £218,202.17 and rising. We could do a lot more if we had the capacity to make contact with all those that have come to our Solidarity and Community Events.

All our work is recorded on our database HOPE. This enables DUWC to report to stakeholders regarding the numbers and issues above. It also allows us to detail financial outcomes where these have been accessed. Not all people tell us the outcome of their claim sadly.

DUWC is a proactive organisation and will endeavour to reach out to former Derbyshire Mineworkers and their immediate dependents. .

Our tour is going to continue over the next six months and it is not unreasonable to think that this will lead to an increase both in numbers of people helped but also those referred. We include in our casework an agreed referral leaflet signposting claimants to CISWO social workers for follow-ups on Hardship issues.

Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres is now heavily dependent on project funding in order to continue its work. We have had much praise for our efforts over the past year in recalling the solidarity of the past. We now need the community's solidarity towards us for us to continue our work into the future.



NORTH DERBYSHIRE MINERS WELFARE TRUST FUND

Are you an ex-miner or a miner's dependent from the North Derbyshire Coalfield?

We can help you!

We offer grants to support with the purchase of necessary items.

- White goods
- Mobility equipment
- Furniture
- Household appliances

Help is here – Pomoc jest tutaj

Over the past four years, our Lottery Community Funded migrant advice project has continued to grow and improve its delivery focusing on the true needs of its clients. More vulnerable people are helped through Lottery Know Your Neighbourhoods funding. The project is led by Joanna Zon and Marcin Proc, who have been involved since the outset. Shirebrook, with its high number of local migrants, remains the focus but we continue to see clients from further afield, including across the border in nearby Nottinghamshire and our drop in on a Friday in Chesterfield.

News of the project's success is spreading through positive word of mouth, and Joanna and Marcin have helped 227 unique individuals this year, while dealing with 561 diverse issues. Joanna and Marcin still deal with many Settled Status issues, employment, benefits and credits, and health related matters including facilitating surgery appointments. The close links with local organisations mean that no-one is turned

away without being signposted or referred for the help they need. Our close connections and project involvement with Derbyshire Law Centre have also meant that our clients have been able to access legal advice and support with immigration, debt, housing and employment matters.

Migrants/Refugees from Ukraine

We continue to help former Ukrainian nationals with:

- New benefits claims
- National Insurance Number applications
- School admissions
- Emergency cash payments (via the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund).
- Registration with GP practice
- Direct support for the victims of exploitation or abuse
- Collaboration and signposting to other services providing support for refugees.

Help is here – Pomoc jest tutaj

Our service for Ukrainian refugees is well regarded throughout the community, as evidenced from the personal feedback we continue to receive. Here are just two examples:

- Hello my name is Paula, my English is still not good enough, but I hope that Google Translate will translate correctly what I am thinking and feeling now. I want to say a few words about the wonderful people Joanna and Marcin. When life throws you into hell, angels come to help. These angels for me were Joanna and Marcin. When Russia came to my country with a war in February of last year, I and my two sons fled into the unknown. We were invited by an English family to come and stay. These are incredible, kind and sensitive people who gave us their home, but they did not know how to draw up documents for us. We were the first family to come to Derbyshire. Joanna and Marcin came to our aid. They were good professionals, kind and sensitive people. They supported us, gave advice, helped us to complete the necessary online forms and documents. It was incredible

help and support. I thank fate for sending me these people.

- I want to express my deep gratitude to Joanna and Marcin for their help with all my benefits. When I first arrived, I could not navigate and perceive information correctly. I didn't know what to do, I was completely confused. But when I got an appointment with these wonderful people, I realized that the world is not without good people. They created all the conditions for the perception of information, found a translator, for which I want to say a special thank you (thanks to the translator Elina). First they asked how I was, where I was from, listened to me, offered tea, and then working through questions. At the end of the registration, we hugged and they wished me all the best and said that everything would be fine. It was an important moment for me, as I realized with these gestures and words that I am not alone and I have support. Thank you for your staff, understanding and support! Oksana from Ukraine.

Help is here – Pomoc jest tutaj

Volunteers

We have a core group of 5 volunteers – who have been with us for 2 years and are very reliable and committed. All are local and started off as clients and have been fully trained by Joanna and Marcin.

Between them they speak five different languages – Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, Czech, and Polish – which has proved invaluable to the running of the project.

Case Studies

Mary is 24, she is a single mother of 2 children. She has lived in the UK since she was 10 years old. She is a Universal Credit (UC) claimant. Because she has pre-settled, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) made a Habitual Residency Test review, her UC claim was suspended, and she was left with no money to live on. She didn't know what to do and she was worried that she would be homeless and would have no money to buy food for her children.

After contacting DWC we have been told that her claim can be suspended for another few months. We advised Mary that the best option for her would

be to make an application for Settled Status, as she meets all the criteria to apply for it. Settled Status allows her to claim UC without the need of passing the Habitual Residency Test so her claim should be restarted as soon as she gets it. We helped her make an application to the Home Office and a few weeks after her claim was restarted as she was granted Settled Status.



Miners' Strike Exhibition Launch and Tour Music and Memories!

The Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres have reached out to all former miners, wives, partners and widows during the year marking the 40th Anniversary of the Great Miners' Strike.

The launch of a much-awaited exhibition commemorating the 1984-5 Miners' Strike took place to a packed house on Thursday 7th March 2024 in the Chesterfield Market Hall Assembly Rooms.

Carmel O'Toole and Andy Hoult sang for the invited guests, that include veterans of the dispute, both men and women, as well as the people and organisations that made the Exhibition possible.

It is 40 years since the miners' strike. Most North Derbyshire people (apart from those who are too young) have memories of those momentous days. The Exhibition, following a month long run attracting over 1650 visitors, proceeded to tour through the towns and parishes of North Derbyshire, allowing people to look back on the days that touched the lives of so many.

This exhibition gives the perspective of those men and women who took action in defence of their jobs



John Burrows, former miner and NUM official addresses the launch

and communities. The Exhibition also includes film shows, talks and lectures.

Colin got the idea of staging the display when visiting the 'Chesterfield During Lockdown' exhibition last spring. With the museum being



Miners' Strike Exhibition Launch and Tour Music and Memories!

closed for renovation the opportunity of using the town centre location became a possibility.

"Early last year, Janet Wilson and Kate Alvey contacted me to see if it would be possible to stage something that would fully place on record the incredible efforts of local women in sustaining the miners' strike in Derbyshire for a whole year." Colin went on to say "Women across North Derbyshire set up 24 strike centres, but they didn't just feed the families: they joined picket lines, they demonstrated, and travelled the length and breadth of the country raising money and addressing meetings. This exhibition is a tribute to all who took part, but especially the women who gave their all."

"The miners were forced back without an agreement and people have asked: why are you commemorating what many see as a defeat? Win, lose or draw, our people took a stand and found a resilience that many people doubted. Ten years after the strike, all the main pits in Derbyshire were closed and on the sites of many are now the modern day sweatshops reliant on agency labour and zero or minimum hours contracts. Unionisation in



these workplaces is difficult, and consequently working conditions are poor with little opportunity for grievances to be aired for fear of the sack or being seen as a troublemaker.

"We have all been affected by the miners' strike, even if it is not immediately recognised.

Miners' Strike Exhibition Launch and Tour Music and Memories!

At DUWC we have had to deal with the redundancies at the pits and complementary industries. Wages have stagnated and for many have plummeted, with opportunities for young people limited, leading to an exodus of talent. Many young people cannot earn the money to leave the family home, and mortgages are out of reach without a secure job with a contract.”

DUWC is using the exhibition to offer help and support to all attending, making sure that they are maximising their incomes during the present cost of living crisis. Many former miners, their partners and widows have come along to have a look at the photos, banners, reflections and recollections. The mining community is a proud community and many are not getting all the help that they now need in old-age. People have paid in and DUWC can help them get through these hard times with dignity. Benefits like Attendance Allowance are not means tested but are still massively under-claimed. Many people have been helped to claim through this year.

Many young people in Derbyshire may never have seen a cobble of coal, which would have been

unthinkable 40 years ago. The exhibition features a piece of coal that came from the last cut at Markham Colliery in May 1993.

The miners' strike is part of our history: North Derbyshire towns and villages grew on the back of the mining industry. DUWC, in putting on this exhibition have given people the opportunity to remember and reflect. The hope is that it also gives inspiration to those fighting for their jobs and better terms and conditions today.

Community and Solidarity
An exhibition commemorating
**The Great Miners' Strike in
North Derbyshire 1984-85**

FREE ENTRY

Open Monday to Saturday 10am till 4pm
This exhibition runs from Monday 4th March
2024 until Wednesday 27th March 2024

Market Hall Assembly Rooms, Chesterfield
Supported by Chesterfield Borough Council

TOBY WILSON
DUWC
TOBY WILSON

CHESTERFIELD
WOMEN
SUPPORT
MINERS
LIVES

PEACEFUL
POLICE-FULL
PICKETING

MINERS
TODAY
YOUR

IF
BICKER
GET ON
THE

It's Yo
STRIKE

Comments in the Exhibition Visitors' Book

- Excellent exhibition. It brought back lots of memories and emotions. A very good learning opportunity for those too young to remember.
- Solidarity with the miners – brave men and women – excellent exhibition – I will return with friends.
- Brought back a lot of memories. Fantastic display about the strike.
- An absolutely fantastic and moving exhibition, perfectly reminding us of the meaning of the class struggle, and reminding us of the necessity of solidarity. We must draw the lessons for today.
- The piece of coal on a wooden plinth – the plinth was made by me – I was joiner at Markham

– pleasure to see it after 40 years.

- Came to see this exhibition today I'm not an ex-miner but I thought it was brilliant. I remember it very well!
- Wonderful exhibition. Massive congrats & respect to everyone involved in making this happen.
- Excellent, the strength and guts of miners, their wives and families, were amazing.
- We have been to talks and screenings. To see people here and talk about the times has been great.
- Thank you for mounting this – reminder of how the government was hostile but could not break the spirit of the miners.



Comments in the Exhibition Visitors' Book



The Last Piece of Markham Coal

This lump of coal was taken from the last commercial cut of coal in the Blackshale Seam of Markham No1 Collier on the dayshift of Friday 21st May 1993.

At the end of that shift, Markham ceased to be a British coalmine and was transferred into private ownership to be salvaged thus ending 111 years of coal production.

At the time of the closure, there was a known reserve of 50 million tonnes available to be mined.

- Very interesting. Good to see women represented.
- My partner at the time was arrested in London at a rally and carted off. The photo was then used to advertise Dr Marten boots.
- Brilliant exhibition. Thank you – brought back deeply felt memories. My hairdressing business was badly affected but I stood by the miners 100% and still do.
- A lot of old names and faces from Chesterfield in the stories and photos. I was taken around Markham Pit not long before it closed. A tough and dangerous job. A memorable exhibition.
- Bringing back memories of hardship, hard times – but what times they were.
- My one and only comment (stupid to some) is that there were no Kleenex tissues provided because its ability to communicate the trauma of 1984/1985 has deeply impacted me and brought tears to my eyes. I leave educated but with a heavy heart! Thank you.
- Very innovative and captured the feeling in the area at the time – lots of energy – lots of community. Thanks for setting things up.
- Brings back many memories both



Comments in the Exhibition Visitors' Book

of family some who went on strike some that didn't and that caused so much trouble. I remember a school friend Pete was teaching me the drums but after 6 months on strike he had to sell his prize kit.

- Hollingwood Primary School will be studying the local mining community and the Miners' Strikes. I have visited today to try to arrange for the children to visit one exhibition. Thank you for your help.

- Humbling to see and remember how the mining communities fought for their jobs and their communities and took their fight to the government. – The struggle goes on for jobs and dignity and community. Thanks to DUWCs for bringing together



Barry and Dawn Hawkins, two of our volunteers at the exhibition

these photos and memorabilia!

- An extraordinary and excellent selection – it must never be lost. If not on display please ensure careful archiving.
- Incredibly forceful and poignant exhibition. It genuinely

made me cry for all that lost passion and activism – and for the wonderful communities damaged by the State.

- Absolutely fantastic. We have visited several times and have to say thanks to the people who have worked very hard to put this together. The films brought back many emotional memories and the sense of rebellion and injustice that has never died burst into flame once more – even though we don't have coal!
- Really interesting exhibition that took me back to 1984 when my dad was on strike for a year from Markham. I ate a lot of jam sandwiches.

Around the area – Chesterfield



Back when the Unemployed Workers Centres were formed, the Chesterfield Borough Council were significant partner in our genesis. The provision of our first office

on Shepley's Yard (off the doughnut roundabout), and the Goldwell Rooms on Ashgate Road were provided by the Chesterfield Borough Council, along with a small grant. Other local authorities came on board and DUWC developed into the organisation it is today. The support of District, Borough, Town and Parish Councils is crucial to the DUWC, giving the organisation democratic accountability at the local level.

The financial support is also of great importance in giving the Centres the core funding in order to attract financial support from charitable trusts and grant givers. Many of the Centre's projects could not take place without our strong links with the local authorities.

At the moment our funding from Chesterfield, Borough Council expires in March 2026. It is imperative that our funding is restored as soon as possible. The advice sector is contracting with publicised difficulties, facing citizens, advice and many voluntary organisations.

A mineworkers case study – Old Whittington

A woman from Old Whittington came to our Chesterfield Office. Our adviser was assisting her regarding her benefits. In the process of the case she mentioned that her husband was an ex miner and that he had problems with his knees.

We advised her that he could put in a claim for Industrial injuries disablement benefit (IIDB). Subsequently we helped him to complete the form and he was awarded IIDB osteoarthritis of the knees payable at £41.52 per week.

We also advised him to claim attendance allowance. Again our adviser assisted him with the claim form and he was awarded the highest rate of £101.75 per week. There was also a back payment of £814.

This meant total income maximization of £143.27 per week.

Around the area – Chesterfield



Andy Parkes, Welfare Rights Adviser

Many people are supported by our service and would be further impoverished if we were to cease operation or change our focus in chasing external funding.

Our reach in Chesterfield Borough is supported by advice sessions in Hasland, Brimington and

Staveley, as well as at the HQ at 1 Rose Hill East.

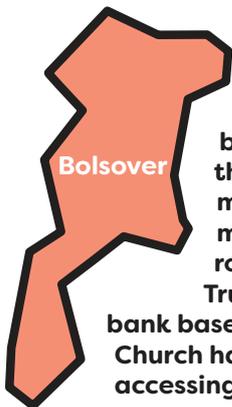
Our great miners' strike commemoration exhibition has been on tour in the borough, spending a week in Brimington and the weekend in Poolsbrook.

School children from Hollingwood and Poolsbrook attended sessions, with former miners John Burrows, Steve Brunt and Dennis Clayton, giving a talk, covering the working conditions down a pit, as well as the reasons people took the action they did. The children were very enthusiastic and engaged with the talks in what was a very illuminating and successful exercise.

Chesterfield flood victim case study

A 75 year old woman who lives in central Chesterfield came to see us with a Social Prescriber after hearing the Co-ordinator address the meeting for flood victims at the Lighthouse Church on Chatsworth Rd. The client had been flooded and had to leave her home. The flooding was very severe with up to four feet of water in her house. Sadly, just 48 hours later she had a serious operation in hospital. This was unrelated to the flood. She was feeling very low and confused having lost almost everything in her home. Additionally, her health condition will have a lifelong health impact. She will need help and support with many daily issues. We were able to advise and support her with claiming Attendance Allowance, Council Tax issues, Flood Grant and an application to Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF). We also helped with the Blue Badge Scheme and approached utility companies on her behalf.

Around the area – Bolsover



The District is covered by outreach offices at Pinxton, Bolsover, Clowne and Creswell, as well as the HQ in Shirebrook. Our Bolsover Town advice sessions have been based in the library but problems with the lift and renovation to the building, have meant that we have taken the decision to move our surgeries to Bolsover assembly rooms on Hilltop. Our work with the Trussell Trust and the South Normanton food bank based at the Saint Michaels and all Angels Church has led to many more people from the area accessing advice and representation.

The great miners' strike commemoration exhibition has so far been taken to Langwith Village hall, Bolsover, assembly rooms, and Bolsover Castle. The work has led to a greater uptake of attendance allowance and pension credit amongst ex-miners, wives and partners and allowed us to talk to the wider community about social security issues and maximising incomes.

John Power and Karen Seymour (both pictured right) have worked alongside our fantastic volunteers in delivering the service across the District. Many people in the district also access our services at Alfreton and Chesterfield in particular.

Case Study – Bolsover

A woman came in to our Shirebrook office. After finishing work on ill health grounds her Statutory Sick Pay had finished and she did not know what to do as she had no income and could not afford her bills and rent. She was told by a friend to come and speak to us. Her landlord had indicated they would be looking to evict her if the rent was not paid in full.

Our adviser did a full benefit check and identified claims for New Style Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Universal Credit (UC) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP). We helped her make the claims, reported she was not fit for work to UC and completed claim forms. She contacted us to inform us that she had been awarded UC, awarded PIP at enhanced/enhanced and that DWP had accepted she was not fit for work and awarded ESA support group.

- PIP £691 per 4 weeks
- UC £627.63 per month – including housing costs
- ESA £259 per fortnight

Around the area – Bolsover

Case Study – Creswell

A man from Creswell accessed our outreach at Creswell, Limestone House, in relation to a long standing Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claim. He had been receiving assistance from another organisation in Worksop but had been refused PIP after assessment and Mandatory Reconsideration. He had been informed that they would not be able to assist any further as he needed to appeal but as the decision had been made over a month ago he would not be able to do this. He was advised by one of his friends to come in and see if we could help.

He had complex mental health issues and the decision to refuse had been made over 5 months ago. However, when speaking to him it became clear he had good cause for a late appeal request. We helped submit appeal and also did a benefit check. We were able to help make a claim for UC which he had not been advised to claim before. We advised he submit fit notes and helped him make sure his UC claim was correct.

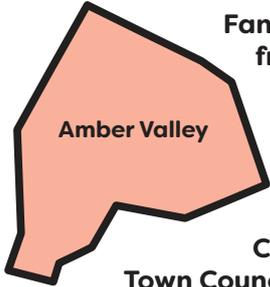
He received a phone call from DWP conceding PIP appeal and he was awarded standard Daily Living and the enhanced mobility component.

We helped him to claim Universal Credit and the assessment for Limited Capability for Work Related Activity as he was not fit for work.

- PIP standard Daily Living: £68.10 enhanced mobility: £71.00. £505.40 every 4 weeks
- PIP back pay: £5685.75
- UC: £1139.40 per month



Around the area – Amber Valley



Amber Valley

Fantastic support from Alfreton town, Council, Somercotes Parish Council, Heanor and Loscoe Town Council and Belper Town Council, supplemented by a grant Amber Valley Borough Council, have ensured a far-reaching service across the borough.

Colin Bennett (pictured right), Jon Jarvis (pictured below) and John Power have made a great contribution to the work in the area, supported by our Trussell Trust adviser, Lindsay Nichols and Joanne Johnson.



Case Study – Alfreton

We assisted an Alfreton man with an application for Attendance Allowance. This is a non-means tested disability benefit for those over state pension age, and not in receipt of any other disability benefits, who have a need for care and attention to help with, what the DWP term, their bodily functions.

As the man lives alone, and no-one received Carer's Allowance or the carer element of Universal Credit for looking after him, receiving Attendance Allowance increases his Pension Credit minimum income guarantee from £218.15 to £299.65 per week (different amounts for couples). We carried out an initial calculation and found that he missed out on potential Pension Credit by 18 pence per week. However, because the client lacked full details of his private pensions and any tax deducted, we made a Pension Credit claim anyway. The DWP calculated that he is entitled of 84 pence per week of Pension Credit: a trivial amount in itself, but receiving a Pension Credit top-up, however little, acts as a passport to other benefits such as winter fuel allowance, a free tv licence for over 75's, potential help with dental and eye care costs, and further help with Council Tax and Housing Benefit.

We can assist anyone over state pension age (both over state pension age for couples) to determine if they are entitled to Pension Credit.

Around the area – Amber Valley



In particular, our Alfreton office has been very busy this year drawing in people from the

surrounding area to our easily accessible town centre location. Our work with the food bank in Alfreton on Wednesdays has also added to the number receiving help and boosting incomes.

Colin Bennett has built relations with health professionals and organisations in the south and west of the Borough increasing the number of referrals to the service.

Case Study – Ripley

A woman from Ripley, with severe mental and physical health problems, via her appointee, sought our assistance after the DWP decided that she had been over paid around £2600 in benefits, which they intended to recover. The DWP also applied a £50 Civil Penalty charge.

The stated reason was that her appointee (her elderly and frail mother) had not informed the DWP that she had live-in carers with her 24 x 7. This had led to an overpayment of the Severe Disability Premium for her income-based Employment & Support Allowance as a claimant is not entitled to this premium if they live with someone.

The DUWC advisor, upon checking the relevant legislation, noted that employed carers, provided by a company, do not count as someone

living with a claimant for these purposes.

The woman's appointee had already made a Mandatory Reconsideration request of the DWP, who were unmoved. The DUWC advisor therefore made an application to an independent tribunal on the grounds that the DWP had misunderstood the law. Upon becoming a respondent in a legal case, the DWP changed their decision and cancelled both the overpayment and penalty charge.

Sadly, the client's health is such that she would be unaware of all this, but her mother is relieved at the outcome. It is most unlikely that the case could have been resolved without help from DUWC. As an aside, while she was visiting DUWC, we were also able to check the appointee's and her husband's Pension Credit award and secure a considerable increase.

Around the area – North East Derbyshire



Thanks to the District Council and the Henry Smith, Covid Support grant we have been able to maintain our outreach program throughout North East Derbyshire. Sessions are held at Clay Cross, Grassmoor, North Wingfield and Eckington.

Brigit Shipman (pictured left), Joanne Johnson, Katrina Hudson (pictured right) and our experienced volunteer, Jon Jarvis have staffed the sessions that complement the work carried out at the main offices were North East, Derbyshire District residents access services. The support of Parish Councils is also very important, not only in terms of small grants, but also in terms of their role in encouraging people to check their benefit entitlement. This has been a particular value in Clay Cross. Were Parish Councillors have addressed meetings and coffee mornings to direct people to the advice sessions to carry out benefit checks and claims. We have also accessed funds both in Clay Cross and Chesterfield to boost the number of volunteers supporting our services.



Case Study – Holmewood

A man from Holmewood needed our help and contacted our Chesterfield and Alfreton offices as he had had a Personal Independence Payment review. He suffers severe anxiety and rarely leaves his home. His previous award was standard daily living. Following the review despite a worsening condition the mobility element was not awarded. With our assistance this decision was challenged. A tribunal date was set and our advisor wrote a submission to the tribunal as it was felt the man may become overwhelmed on the day. The tribunal panel made a decision on the submission without the man needing to attend. Enhanced daily living and mobility was awarded for 5 yrs. Arrears of approx. £7000 and benefit of £690 per month were awarded.

Around the area – North East Derbyshire

Managed migration woes

A Clay Cross man approached us for advice regarding his move from Tax Credits to Universal Credit as part of the managed migration process. He was in state of panic because he was aware that he had missed his deadline date for claiming Universal Credit (UC) and being automatically eligible to receive transitional protection – and so not to be financially worse off with the migration to UC.

The man brought in his Migration Notice confirming that he had exceeded his deadline date for claiming UC by a week and a half. He informed us that at least three people had told him he could stay on Tax Credits, as the migration to UC was optional.

We informed the man that the advice he had received was not correct and that the migration to UC was not take it or leave it, he would need to take action fast! We made it clear to him

that he may have lost the right to transitional protection.

We rang HMRC Tax Credits Office who informed us that the man's Tax Credits award was still live, but he would need to contact the UC Migration Helpline at the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) as soon as possible. On his behalf, we did just that, explaining why the man had missed his deadline date.

The DWP's advice was for the man to make a new claim for Universal Credit, guaranteeing that he would still be entitled to Transitional protection.

This case highlights the need for those claimants receiving Migration Notices informing them that they need to claim Universal Credit by a stated deadline date, and unsure of what it all means, and what to do, should seek official Welfare Benefits advice and not listen to those without the credentials to do so.

User Feedback

In September we hold our annual user feedback month to ensure that the high standards we have set for ourselves over the years are being maintained. The Feedback we have received from across our venues has been very positive. 169 people completed the survey.

Waiting times

- 0–5 mins: 70 people
- 5–15 mins: 50 people
- 15–30 mins: 30 people
- 30–60 mins: 12 people
- Over 1 hour: 7 people

169 people responded that they would use our service again – **a 100% positive response rate.**

169 responded that they would recommend our service to family or friends – **a 100% success rate.**

Ways of hearing about DUWC

Each individual was asked how they had heard of DUWC

- Family / Friends: 93 people
- Referral from another service, including Jobcentre: 33 people

- Social Media: 6 people
- Leaflet: 1 person
- Signage: 3 people
- Trade Union: 2 people
- Used before: 25 people
- Other: 6 people

How users felt about the service

Each individual was asked how they felt about the service we provided them:

- Very Happy: 148 people
- Satisfied: 21 people
- Dissatisfied: 0 people
- Very Unhappy: 0 people

Issues that users felt the DUWC should organise campaigns around

The vast majority indicated energy bills, food prices and cost of living. Problems with PIP Medicals and Assessments were highlighted plus an array of benefit issues including their complexity and low rates. This information will guide our lobbying and campaigning activities into the new year.



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

Bolsover District

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

Monday, Tues, Weds

9am – 11.30am and 1pm – 4pm

Thursday, Friday

9am – 11.30am

Brimington

Community Centre, High Street
Monday 9.00am – 12noon

Hasland

Hasland Hub, The Working Men's Club,
Hampton St

Wednesday 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Staveley

Staveley Library, Hall Lane
Thursday

9.30am – 12noon

North Wingfield

Community Resource Centre,
Whiteleas Ave

Tuesday 1.00am – 3:30pm

Grassmoor

Community Centre, New Street
Friday 9.00pm – 11.30pm

Clay Cross

Clay Cross Social Centre, Market
Street

Monday 10.00pm – 1.00pm

Bolsover

Assembly Rooms, Hill Top

Tuesday 1.00pm – 3.30pm

Clowne

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

Creswell

Limestone House, Elmton Road

Thursday 1.00pm – 3.30pm

Eckington

Business Centre, Market Street

Thursday 1.00pm – 3.30pm

New Houghton

Community Hub, Rotherham Rd
Thursday 10.00am – 2.00pm

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–12noon

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

Strutts Centre, Derby Road

Thursday 1.00pm – 3.30pm

Check www.duwc.org.uk for updates!

Trustees 2023/2024



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.

- Cllr. Graham Baxter
- Ian Rutledge
- Hilary Cave
- Cllr. Mary Kenny
- Nicolo Ferrera
- Elaine Tidd
- Cllr. Amanda Sarjeant
- Cllr Christine Smith
- Sarah Roy
- Angela Webster
- Cllr. Mary Dooley
- Nikki Tugby
- Joe Knight
- Andrew King
- Paul Hardy
- Cllr. Steve Marshall-Clarke

Centre Staff 2023

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Colin Hampton | Co-ordinator |
| Susie Bennett | Assistant Co-ordinator |
| Esther Fisher | Assistant Co-ordinator |
| Andy Parkes | Welfare Rights Advisor |
| Katrina Hudson | Welfare Rights Advisor |
| Tim Wilkinson | Welfare Rights Advisor |
| Karen Seymour | Welfare Rights Advisor |
| Brigit Shipman | Welfare Rights Advisor |
| Jon Jarvis | Welfare Rights Advisor |
| Keran Gladders | Welfare Rights Advisor |
| Lyndsey Nicholls | Welfare Rights Advisor |
| Joanne Johnson | Welfare Rights Advisor |
| John Power | Money Sorted Advisor |
| Joanna Zon | Co-ordinator, 'Help is Here' Project |
| Marcin Proc | Advisor, 'Help is Here' Project |

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

