



Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres Annual Report 2025

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42 Years and still going strong

Our organisation has been delivering its services since the early 1980s. In April 1983, Gordon Smith stepped into the small Portakabin on Shepley’s yard (where MyDentist is now) on the doughnut roundabout in Chesterfield. The Unemployed Workers Centre had its own building for the first time. They were very humble beginnings. All that was in the building was a desk and a couple of chairs. Gordon had to secure a donation from the Trades Council for a kettle and mugs. Gordon, alongside Marion Brooks and Doug Herring, soon grew the organisation into one that had great respect within the local community. Advice work and representation was the main task of the Centre alongside campaigning for full employment and dignity for those that cannot work. We have never drifted away from these core objectives that are still as strong today as when they were established by the Trade Unions in Chesterfield Borough Council back in the 1980s.

Front cover: 30 years on Patchwork Row, Shirebrook - the celebration!

Who Funds us?

The Centres are funded by Chesterfield Borough Council and Bolsover District Council, North East Derbyshire District Council and Amber Valley Borough Council and many Town and Parish Councils. Other funders include the National Lottery Community Fund 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 £7,166,405 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.

Joining our team this year is Alicja Zon, who alongside advice giving duties will support the Help is Here project with administration duties.

Joanne Johnson is working with former Miners,

wives, widows and partners to make sure they are getting what they are entitled to and make them aware of support from the North Derbyshire Miners Welfare Trust.

A number of new volunteers have joined our ranks this year. They join our team of volunteer advisers. Special thanks to Allison Jarvis at Shirebrook and Colin Bennett at Alfreton, Heanor and Belper plus Graham Baxter, Ian Christian, Ray Carpenter and Ann Lambert in Chesterfield. Special thanks go to David Eccles whose funding bid work is crucial to our survival.

New volunteers include Eva Cermacova, Danni-Marie Trotter, Stewart Rooker and Andy King.

A number of volunteers have left the organisation, notably Nazneen Zaidi who is furthering her studies, Shirley Pierson who has retired from her volunteering after a number of valuable years' service. Stephanie Nunes was our first placement from Sheffield Hallam University and was a great addition to our team during her stay.

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



The Chairman writes

As both Chair of Derbyshire, Unemployed Workers' Centres and as a volunteer, I am close to the issues facing the organisation from every angle.

Two days per week I perform triage duties in the Chesterfield office and occasionally at Shirebrook. I see first-hand how many people of all ages, and from different backgrounds, come through our doors. Their concerns are varied but it is obvious that DUWC is held in great esteem, with many people coming as a result of recommendations from family and friends as well as referrals from community organisations and statutory agencies.

The staff and volunteers have a passion for the work and empathy for those seeking help whilst displaying a professionalism in dealing with complex areas of law relating to social security. At Trustee board level, I see the difficulties facing DUWC in a fiercely competitive funding climate. Whereas 30 years ago was the majority of the Centres' funding came from Derbyshire local government sources, now the vast majority of financial support is gained from charitable sources within tight time parameters. This means that, as an organisation, we must have a

conveyor belt of funding bids coming down the line just in order to sustain the overall level of activity. This has to be done whilst maintaining the proud principles on which the organisation was founded back in the early 1980s. We will not chase funding just for the sake of it or deviate from our core values.

I appeal to all our supporters to help, in any way you can. Share this Annual Report, let your local politicians know if you have received a good service, make a financial contribution or come in and volunteer.

I am proud to have been associated with DUWC in many capacities over four decades. I asked you to read this Annual Report and take a look at the extent of the work that is being carried out, improving lives and wellbeing as well as putting much needed money into the pockets of local people that will be spent in the local economy.



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



The Co-ordinator writes

I have been here 40 years and I don't intend retiring yet. 40 years is a milestone and I felt I needed to mark it with a bit of a knees-up at the Labour Club back in February. Thankfully people turned up – past colleagues and supporters alongside new recruits as well as friends and supporters.

My anniversary has given me time for reflection. Here is what I told the Derbyshire Times:

“I don't see any value at all for myself, in batting on behalf for those who've already got money. Who've already got privilege. Who've already got a voice. You don't need to bat for them, they can do it for themselves. What really is a challenge is to give a voice to those who haven't got a voice. Who haven't got power.”

“We need to remind people that we're all interdependent, and it's in our own interests to help the people who we see in the streets, who you might think are not worthy of help. Because one day, that could be your children, it could be your neighbours.”

“I have strong opinions, but I also recognise it's going to be an unusual person that agrees with everything

that I say... And if someone believes that life is a competition, getting the better of other people, and rising to the top, and trampling on people, and that's what life's about, then they're unlikely to agree with me.”

“It's only when the person who's fighting to get to the top and competing with people suddenly finds that they're handicapped in some way by ill health or bad luck or redundancy, that's when they suddenly realise they might need other people after all.”

I will continue to work with the team at DUWC to give support and a voice to those who need our services.



Colin Hampton and team at the anniversary knees-up

Esther Fisher – Why we need your help!

Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres have now helped over 20,000 people since our database went live in 2014. Thanks to Paul Kent (Omtio.com), DUWC operates a superb, confidential recording system that assists us with funding bids and tracking the nature of issues that come through our doors.

When you consider that the Centres have been in existence for over 40 years, the figure of 20,000 can be at least tripled in terms of the overall usage of our services. In one ward in the Bolsover District over a quarter of the population have accessed help from DUWC in the last eleven years! We now have three main offices and 16 outreach venues. DUWC also runs take up campaigns in other villages at occasional venues to try and provide help and support, accessible to all, in Chesterfield, North East, Derbyshire, Bolsover and Amber Valley.

From support to families with children through to senior citizens trying to make ends meet, the DUWC team of staff and volunteers have been giving consistent help for over 40 years.

Everywhere in our catchment area people have sought advice. Ill health can happen to any of us and gives

no respect to where you live. What our statistics show is that the nearer you are to one of our offices or outreaches, the more likely you are to seek advice and support. Many organisations, for their own benefit, force people

to use the phone or computer to access services – we have shown that there is still a need for face to face support, especially amongst the elderly and those who are unwell. Our work could not be carried out without the unswerving commitment of our staff and volunteers.

The coming years are going to be the most difficult in our history, as despite living in a rich country, funding is becoming ever more tight as money is sucked upwards to the upper echelons of society. We will continue to do our best to provide our services and to give a voice to the most vulnerable in our community. This Annual Report is testament to the enormous workload facing our organisation. Not just the statistics and the monies gained but the case studies showing the human stories behind the figures.



Esther Fisher

Our Funders 2025



Local Authorities

- Chesterfield Borough Council
- Amber Valley Borough Council
- Bolsover District Council
- North East Derbyshire District Council

Parish and Town Councils

- Alfreton Town
- Ault Hucknall
- Belper Town
- Brimington Parish
- Clay Cross Parish
- Clowne Parish
- Eckington Parish
- Grassmoor Parish
- Heanor and Loscoe Town
- Heath and Holmewood Parish

- North Wingfield Parish
- Pinxton Parish
- Pleasley Parish
- Shirebrook Town
- Somercotes Parish
- South Normanton Parish
- Sutton cum Duckmanton Parish
- Warsop Parish

Grants and Donations

- Community Lottery Fund
- Alex Ferry Foundation
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Henry Smith
- North Derbyshire Miners' Welfare Trust
- Trussel Trust
- Derbyshire One Fund For All
- Unite East Midlands Region

- Numerous Unite Industrial Branches
- GMB – Yorks and N.Derbyshire
- GMB Chesterfield Holding Branch
- Thompsons Solicitors
- Graysons Solicitors
- Grassland Hasmoor Futures
- Chesterfield Community Fund
- NE Derbyshire Shared Prosperity Fund
- Anonymous Charitable Donations



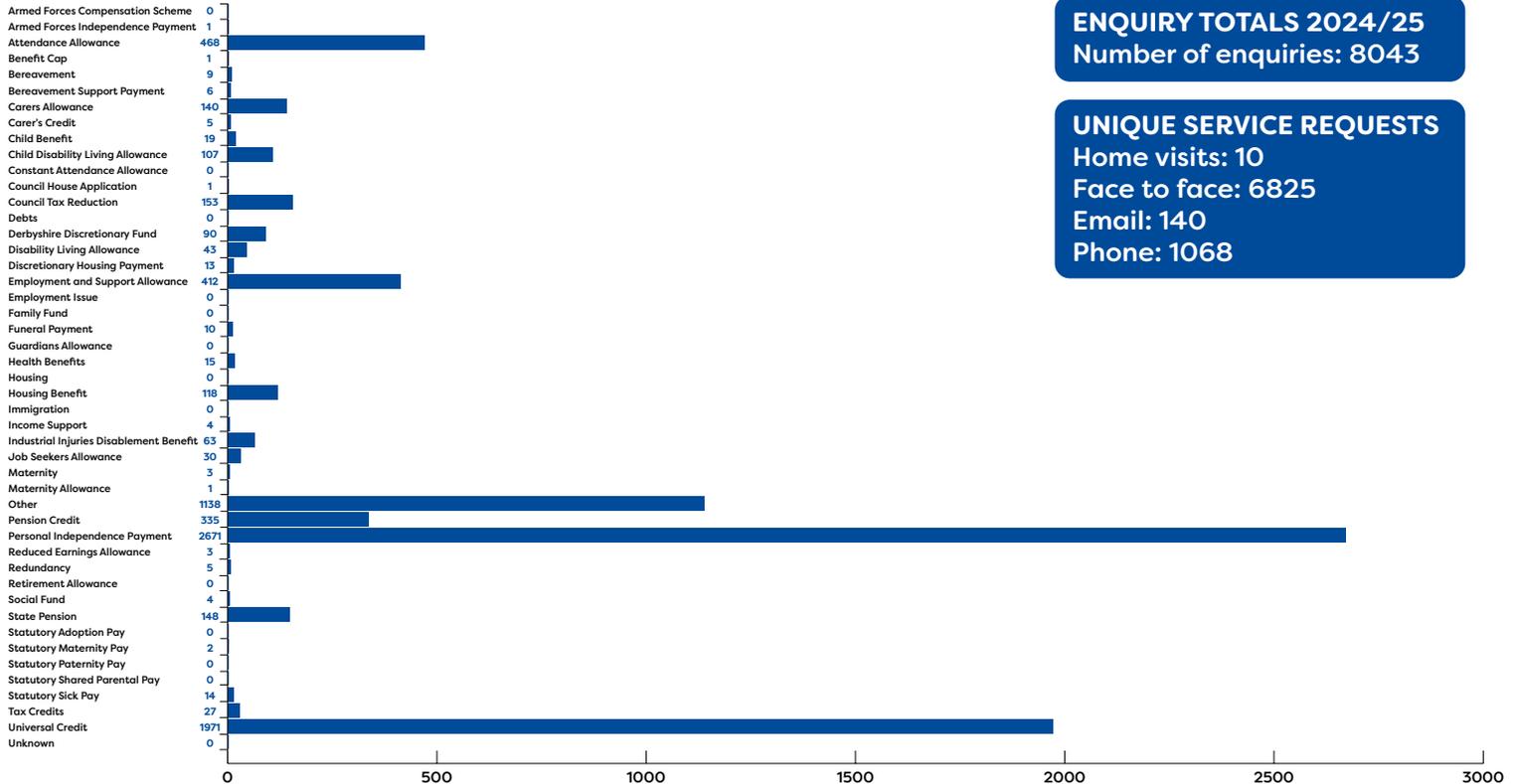
Statistics – Appeals Totals

| Lead Issue | Abandoned | Pending | Completed | Arrears amount | Weekly amount |
|---|-----------|------------|------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Attendance Allowance | 2 | 6 | 5 | £11,531.60 | £256.95 |
| Carers allowance | 0 | 0 | 1 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Child Disability Living Allowance | 1 | 10 | 2 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Council tax reduction | 0 | 1 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Disability Living Allowance | 0 | 1 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Employment and Support Allowance | 3 | 9 | 1 | £4,500.00 | £0.00 |
| Housing benefit | 0 | 1 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Income Support | 1 | 0 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit | 0 | 5 | 3 | £33,814.21 | £261.30 |
| Job Seekers Allowance | 0 | 1 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Pension credit | 0 | 4 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Personal Independence Payment | 36 | 276 | 187 | £936,123.93 | £16,633.71 |
| State Pension | 0 | 2 | 0 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Tax credits | 1 | 1 | 1 | £8,800.00 | £0.00 |
| Universal credit | 6 | 50 | 25 | £40,123.96 | £1,368.60 |
| Overall Totals | 50 | 367 | 225 | £1,034,893.70 | £18,520.56 |

As a result of these tribunals the following amounts were awarded: lump sum arrears £1,034,893. Ongoing weekly benefits (over a year equals £96,3069). In 2025, general enquiries and take-up work resulted in payments of £5,168,443 for Derbyshire Residents. **During this year that has meant £7,166,405 has been won through our advice and representation services across our core work and projects.**



Statistics – Enquiry Issues (excludes case work)



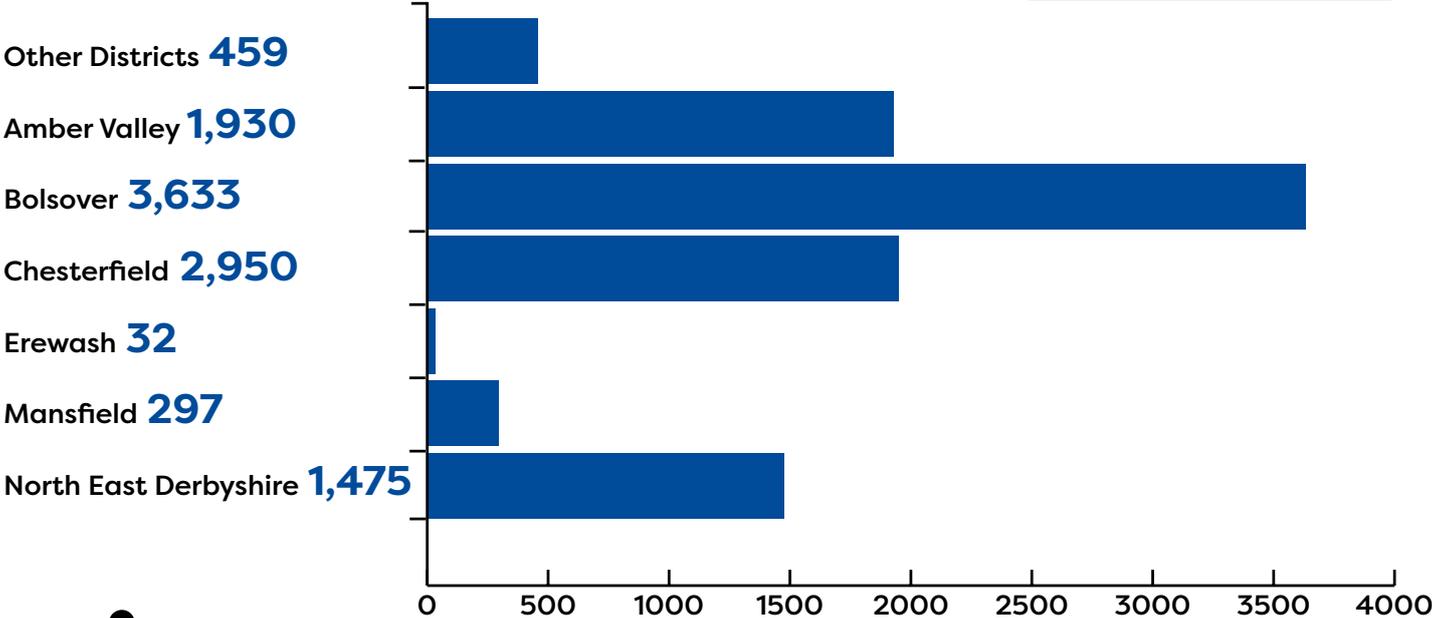
ENQUIRY TOTALS 2024/25
 Number of enquiries: 8043

UNIQUE SERVICE REQUESTS
 Home visits: 10
 Face to face: 6825
 Email: 140
 Phone: 1068

Statistics – Issue Origins

October 1st 2024 – September 30th 2025

Total Issues: 10776



South Normanton and Alfreton Foodbank

With support from the Trussell Trust, DUWC has continued to deliver a funded project providing benefits advice and representation at the foodbank venues in the area as part of their Financial Inclusion Programme. We help to address the reasons why people are having to use foodbanks in the first place and make sure that everyone has the opportunity to see someone to make sure they're receiving support and their full benefit entitlement.

Lyndsey and Joanne (pictured), deliver the project that as well as helping people with benefits applications, represents people in court when they challenge decisions made with regard to their claim. Volunteers at the foodbank signpost their clients to our staff who are very proactive in making sure people do not miss out due to shame or an unwillingness to engage.

Our project has been successful in 2024/25. To date, over the last year we have helped people gain £80,885 in arrears paid and annualized benefits of £430,934. Grants of £1,399 and £100 compensation have also been gained. 157 unique people have been helped with 508 service requests. 7 tribunals have

taken place with our staff representing and there are 6 pending.

Together with with the support of Lisa at the Foodbank we have put together a bid to a funder to help pay for the work undertaken by the Centre in order to make our presence sustainable and give the Foodbank time to become a charity in its own right.

We all look forward to working with Lisa and the team during the next year - with fingers crossed for the funding!



Lyndsey and Joanne

North Derbyshire Miners' Welfare Trust

Our Miners' Strike Exhibition continued into 2025 visiting Bolsover Castle, Whaley Thorns, Clay Cross, Shirebrook and finally Arkwright Town. At each town and village we attracted hundreds of people who were all made aware of the opportunity of a benefits check and the support that is on offer from the North Derbyshire Miners' Welfare Trust Fund.

Our advice worker Joanne Johnson has been working with former miners, their partners, widows and wives to make sure they are getting the benefits to which they are entitled. During the last year we have represented at tribunals and have tribunals pending for this group of people. Tribunal representation is not offered by CISWO social workers and so is a valuable addition to the work that is being carried out by that organisation.

Our exhibition is now looking for a home so it can be stored for future anniversaries. We are talking to Chesterfield Museum Service and if that idea does not bear fruit we will approach the National Mining Museum.

SOME MONTHS AGO, I AVAILED MYSELF OF THE SERVICES OF THE UNEMPLOYED WORKERS CENTRE WHICH IS BASED AT CHESTERFIELD TOWN HALL.

THE U.W.C. ALSO HAS OUTREACH SERVICES BASED IN VARIOUS TOWNS THROUGHOUT NORTH DERBYSHIRE INCLUDING MY HOME TOWN OF BOLSOVER.

SO I ATTENDED THE BOLSOVER OUTREACH WHICH WAS, AT THAT TIME, IN BOLSOVER LIBRARY.

THE YOUNG LADY I SAW AT THE TIME, WAS BRILLIANT, SHE ADVISED MY WIFE AND I, THAT WE MIGHT CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT OF WORK AND PENSIONS.

WE DID SO AND TO CUT A LONG STORY SHORT, WE WERE ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY CLAIM FOR TWO BENEFITS.

WE ARE NOW A LITTLE BIT BETTER OFF BECAUSE OF THE ADVICE WE RECEIVED FROM THE U.W.C.

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE AND I WOULD POSITIVELY ENCOURAGE ANYONE TO CONTACT THE ORGANISATION WHICH IS ENTIRELY VOLUNTARY, YOU COULD MAKE YOURSELVES A LOT BETTER OFF.

P.S. SORRY FOR THE WRITING, ARTHRITIC FINGERS

NDMWT letter page

Without our service many people in the mining community would miss out.



Help is Here

The Community Lottery Fund has taken the decision to award continuation funding to our Help is Here project for another three years. This will allow us to build on the fantastic work undertaken over the five years of its duration and, hopefully, at the end, leave the project in a position to bid for funding in its own right.

The success of Help is Here was key to the continued support of the Lottery Community Fund. Since the start of the project, 920 unique individuals have been helped with 3564 service requests made. Help is Here staff have represented 50 people at Appeals Tribunal where someone wishes to challenge a decision made by the Department for Work and Pensions.

This work has resulted in huge financial gains bringing in money that will be spent in the local economy boosting local business as well as helping people in need. Joanna Zon and Marcin Proc, assisted by a team of volunteers have helped with claims for Social Security entitlements, as well as assisting people with housing applications, immigration, debt, counselling, housing issues and employment problems. The financial gains made

since the start of the project are staggering. £6,066,002 have been won in arrears paid and annualised additional weekly payments as well as a £250,000 in debt written off and £200,000 in compensation and grants.



Alicja, Marcin and Joanna

Our workers told the Lottery in our submission

In 2020 we began Help is Here dedicated support for Eastern European Migrants/Refugees, observing the injustice and discrimination between the clients of the centre made our jobs a mission. Our previous experiences shaped our approach with better understanding of our clients' problems. No one coming to us is turned away without help or advice.

Our primary aim was to help people access benefits and build equality with all members of the community. But people struggle with basic problems such as access to primary medical care hampered by the rudeness and discriminatory behaviour of some staff. We complained and achieved significant improvements. Other problems resolved were

Help is Here cont.

those involving agency workers regularly being discriminated as they did not know their rights.

We helped with several unlawful evictions, and some domestic violence cases where victims, and their children, didn't know where to turn. We worked closely with Women's Aid, the local Council and the Police.

We dealt with benefit cases, endlessly delayed as people were migrants. These were referred to local MPs, and successfully resolved. In 2022 we started the Shirebrook Allotment Group. This was inspired by the amount of clients with mental health issues. Running this project for nearly 3 years resulted in new friendships and people becoming less isolated. We recruit people from our migrant clients, but it is open for everybody and helps to break barriers.

In 2023 came the Ukrainian refugees. People coming to UK not by choice, but by desperation, after traumatic experiences. We helped over 60 to settle locally, working closely with the Polish Community Group and our wonderful Ukrainian volunteer.

Within 5 years of standing by people from the area we see how their approach to life's obstacles and awareness of their rights has changed. They are more confident, aware of their rights, and persuaded that

“don't give up” makes sense. They know the project is here for them, they can turn to us for help knowing we will still stand by them.’

Joanna and Marcin are constantly improving their knowledge and skills by taking part in several training courses and meetings. Last year they successfully passed the IAA exams to become Level 1 Accredited Immigration Advisors. Thanks to this the project will now expand the area of expertise by immigration advice dedicated to the population of migrants not only from Eastern Europe but all over the world.

Volunteers

We have a core group of 5 volunteers – who have been with us for 2 years and are reliable and committed. All are local, started as clients, and have been fully trained. Between them, they speak six different languages – Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, Czech, Slovakian and Polish – which has proved invaluable to the running of the project.

Big thank you to all of these who supported Help is here within last 5 years: Alena Kupcova, Elina Wittington, Anna Lusawa, Bernardeta Stech, Beata Chyla, Aleksandra Apenyo, Bozena Marvill and Daniella Bucuresa.

Karen Rachel Mary Seymour - Obituary

In April this year our much loved adviser Karen Seymour died after a short illness.

Karen joined us as a volunteer in 2011. I went back and looked at her application to volunteer. Her honesty oozed out of the pages.

She told of her life so far

She left Sherwood Hall School with no qualifications, saying she never really had to work because her husband was the breadwinner. She had a feeling that something needed to change and encouraged by family and friends enrolled on a city and guilds level 1 word processing course, passing, and went on to Higher National Diploma in computing at West Notts College, becoming a sessional IT Trainer at Park Road IT Centre. She completed a BSc honours degree in Applied Computing. An achievement that she was very proud of. She planned to train as a teacher but found, I think, her true vocation in welfare rights advice, marrying her personal skills with her passion to helping working class people.

In her application she listed her strengths but told



me of her weaknesses. Amongst her strengths were: Making people feel at ease, patience, particularly with people who aren't confident. Not being afraid of new challenges and willing to go the extra mile for people.

Her weaknesses showed her bravery

Not confident in speaking to a group of people. To combat this she undertook all the public speaking duties she could, speaking at rallies as an anti cuts campaigner, chairing meetings. She told us 'I am sure confidence will come with experience.'

She told us that she worried if she did not meet the standards she set herself.

She said she worried about situations where in the vast majority of cases, there was nothing to worry about! She said that this was driven by her caring deeply about the work that she did and its consequences for other people.

So looking back over her application she has left us all lessons for life. We have now formally named her office the Karen Seymour Room.

Colin Hampton

Allison Jarvis - Supportive Volunteer of the Year

Allison Jarvis was awarded Supportive Volunteer of the Year at this year's Bolsover Volunteer Awards 2025.

Allison has been volunteering at DUWCs Shirebrook Office for 17 years! Allison performs a range of duties from reception to administration as well as advice work having completed all the training courses on offer. Recently she has taken over running our outreach at New Houghton from where she originates. Allison loves the community of Shirebrook and the surrounding area and advertises our services wherever she goes. She deserves a medal as big as a dustbin lid for all the effort she has expended on behalf of DUWC. Allison was deeply affected by the loss of our dear colleague Karen Seymour and spoke very warmly of her impact at the memorial meeting held in Mansfield.

Allison is a mainstay at our Patchwork Row Operation and has stepped up to the plate on many occasions as we have experienced increased usage of our services over the past few years.



Allison Jarvis



Jon Jarvis - Shortlisted, Long Service Volunteer

Jon came to us in January 2016 following his retirement as a solicitor. His experience has been crucial to our work and he has been one of those volunteers that every organisation needs.

If ever we are in need of help – to cover an outreach office or to support a volunteer in their work, Jon is always willing to help if he can.

At short notice, he will help us out providing our accessible services all over Derbyshire. He has been sited this year in Pinxton, Somercotes, Alfreton, Shirebrook and Bolsover.

Although he did not win the Long Service Volunteer award, he is a winner in our eyes. We are, however, grateful to not have to listen to his acceptance speech with the tears and the tributes that would have undoubtedly followed!



Jon Jarvis

Alicja Zon - Volunteer turns employee

“As a recent graduate in Psychology, I’m excited to be working on projects with the DUWC which feel integral to our community. I have volunteered for the organisation since 2020 and seen firsthand the impact our assistance



can have on people’s financial independence and, consecutively, well-being. I have previous experience working with Ukrainian refugees and leveraging my ability to speak different languages in assisting communication and establishing an award-winning charity in 2022 to combat the language barrier for migrants forced to move abroad due to war. No day is the same here at the centre and I am glad to be learning something new with every case. I hope to soon get involved with campaigns and other initiatives to reach vulnerable or struggling members of the public and advocate for their rights.”

Your Voice Your Rights - Take the power back!

Many people completing our user feedback survey have said that they wish for us to campaign with them on the issue of energy prices. Back in April we staged a tug-o-war event in New Square, Chesterfield as part of a nationwide day of action. Our aim was to raise awareness of the private companies pocketing billions of pounds in profit, while members of the public see nothing but rising energy bills.

Our tug-o-war featured a student, senior citizen, student, disabled worker, and an unemployed person pulling for public ownership and lower prices while the Energy companies were pulling for private profit and higher prices! The companies displayed on t-shirts the huge amount of profit that they had made over the last few years. Shoppers were asked to join in to help pull for lower prices and win the day. They were encouraged to get involved in the campaign.

With prices going up again this winter we will continue to press the case for public ownership, lower prices and social tariffs.

Social tariffs are a form of financial relief designed to



Campaigners make their views known in New Square

support households that spend a disproportionate amount of their income on energy bills.

These special tariffs aimed to alleviate the strain of fuel poverty, a condition where more than 10% of a household's income is consumed by energy costs.

Vulnerable consumers would benefit from discounted prices, making it easier for them to heat and power their homes.



Your Voice Your Rights - Save Shirebrook Jobcentre

Shirebrook Jobcentre has been temporarily closed for over a year. DUWC have been told by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that they are either looking to make good the building, or move to alternative premises in Shirebrook. In the meantime, the DWP have redirected people to Mansfield Job Centre.

Telephone message sent to claimants have mistakenly directed people to the closed building in Shirebrook with people then missing interviews leading to problems with their benefits. The temporary closure has created issues for those called in for interviews in terms of both cost and difficulty for sick and disabled people. The DWP made contact with the DUWC in April 2025 informing that they were no nearer finding a resolution to the premises problem.



Shirebrook Jobcentre

We have been in contact with the local MP Natalie Fleet who reassured us:

“Shirebrook must keep its Jobcentre and I am doing all I can to make sure this happens. I have been in communication with the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers’ Centre and the DWP about the situation since rumours about its possible permanent closure surfaced before Christmas.”

“However, I have been reassured by the DWP that the intention is to keep it in Shirebrook, including in the answer provided for a written parliamentary question I tabled this month, where they said they are exploring all options to maintain Jobcentre services in Shirebrook.”

“I will hold them to that.”

Everyone in Shirebrook will know someone, friend, neighbour or family member who might need these services should they fall sick, become disabled or lose their job. We must put pressure on to the DWP and decision makers to retain a full service at a Jobcentre in Shirebrook.

Your Voice Your Rights - Gig in the Garden

The National Organisation We Shall Overcome is a movement of musicians and artists working across Britain under the banner 'not charity but solidarity'. Since 2015, 'We Shall Overcome' have put together over 1000 gigs, raising an estimated £450,000 in cash, food, clothing and bedding for foodbanks, homeless shelters and other causes supporting those hardest hit by cuts and the cost of living crisis.



In July one of DUWC's supporters decided to host a gig in her garden in aid of raising funds for the Centre. Over 100 people bought tickets and £1405.31 was raised.

It was a fantastic event, despite the rain, and everyone at the Centre is grateful to the organisers and all who supported the event.



Your Voice Your Rights - Opposing Cuts to Disability Benefits

DUWC have been lobbying and campaigning in relation to the proposed changes to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and the Government's Pathways to Work agenda.

We have met with local MPs and put our case alongside working people claiming PIP. Amongst the issues raised were the strong links between poverty, inequality, and poor mental and physical wellbeing. Our delegation emphasised the need for Government to recognise that employers need to do more to give employment opportunities to people with health conditions and those that are disabled. It is no good providing work coaches and measures that imply that the fault of unemployment lies with the unemployed in terms of their motivation and readiness. Both MPs raised these issues with the ministerial team.

We will continue to maintain dialogue with the hope of defending people who are disabled, both in and out of work, as well as those living with long term health problems. Impoverishing people helps no one and places further pressure and costs on the NHS.

Elizabeth Mullins (pictured) has now qualified as a doctor. She could not have done this without the help of Personal Independence Payment that enabled her to continue her studies. With the November Budget coming along soon we will continue to increase our lobbying work.

Politicians must stop scapegoating the sick and those who are disabled.



Elizabeth Mullins being interviewed on BBC East Midlands today

Around the area – Chesterfield



The Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres began life in

Chesterfield in the early 1980s. In Chesterfield, Trade Union Council together with the Chesterfield Borough Council, established the first Centre on Shepley's Yard on the doughnut roundabout in 1983, following work carried out in the union offices.



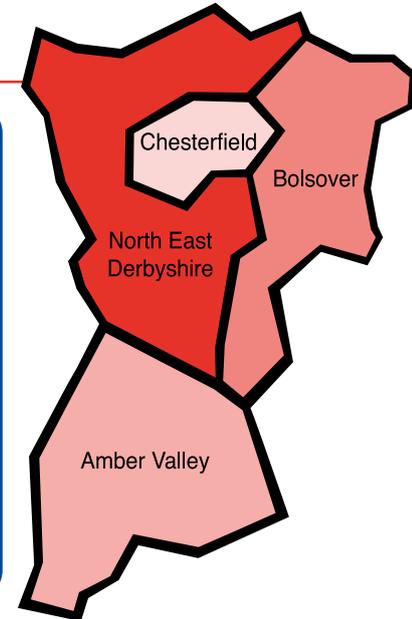
Andy Parkes, Welfare Rights Adviser

The link with the Chesterfield Borough Council has remained solid to this day.

It is important to our organisation that it has the democratic accountability that runs alongside that support.

The number of unique Chesterfield Residents who have accessed our services since 2014 is an incredible 7135.

“Thank you to all at DUWC who helped my mum fill in the form for attendance allowance. I’m pleased to say she has been awarded this. We appreciate your hard work and dedication. Thank you for everything.”
- R & M Walton



“I am writing to thank DUWC for supporting me recently with an enquiry. As usual I was given clear advice, which simply put my mind at ease. Thank you, as always, for your kind support and expertise.” - P M Brimington

Around the area – Chesterfield

Case Study - Inkersall

A woman came into our Staveley Outreach with an Attendance Allowance form. Our adviser helped her complete the form and whilst she was at our outreach, we identified that her husband should also make a claim. We ordered him a form and then helped him complete the form.

The couple returned to inform us that they had both been awarded the highest rate of **Attendance Allowance, which is £108.55 each. They were awarded arrears of three months, which totaled £1302.80 each.**

Then we identified that the couple were entitled to **Pension Credit of £211.00 per week** and the maximum amount of council tax reduction.

They would also then be entitled to the **winter fuel allowance.**

The total income maximization **totaled £448.10 per week** on top of the arrears.

Case Study - Brockwell

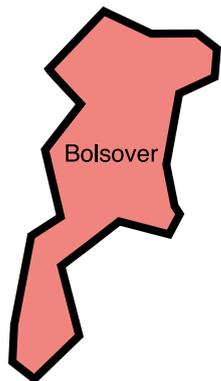
A Brockwell man visited our Chesterfield advice centre for help completing a new Council Tax Reduction (CTR) review form. His Local Authority (LA) had discovered that he had a level of savings that would affect his entitlement to Council Tax Reduction; it was a certainty that the man had been overpaid CTR, his Local Authority would be seeking to recover any overpayment.

During the advice session we identified that despite the man having savings he was entitled to **Guaranteed Pension Credit of £90 a week**, with full entitlement to Council Tax Reduction.

Both Pension Credit and CTR were back dated for 3 months, helping to clear most of the Council Tax arrears. The man was also entitled to Winter Fuel payments as a result of being entitled to pension Credit.

The man found himself **better off by £112 a week**, with ongoing entitlement to both Guaranteed Pension Credit and Council Tax Reduction.

Around the area – Bolsover



Another busy year in the District of Bolsover. Outreach offices are based in Clowne, Creswell, Bolsover, New Houghton and Pinxton, as well as the HQ at Shirebrook.

The main team covering the district consists of John

Power, Andy Parkes, Jon Jarvis and Ali Zon supported by our great team of volunteers, including Allison Jarvis, Christine Dale and Andy King. As featured in this annual report, the death of Karen Seymour came as a terrible shock to us all. Allison has taken over Karen's duties at New Houghton.

The numbers of people using our services since April 2014 in the Bolsover District is an incredible 5751.

Case Study - Bolsover

A man came into see us in regards to ESA and PIP. He has been diagnosed with cancer and in poor health. He wanted support in regards to claiming essential benefits and filling in forms for benefits. On his third visit he explained he was from the Windrush generation.

He was 10 years old when he left his home in Jamaica to be with his parents and sisters in the London. Since then the client has lived and worked in the UK all his life. He has never applied for a passport and never been abroad. Before the new E visas were created he had a biometric permit. He states that he had to apply for British citizenship last year and paid £1700.

We discussed the Wind rush charity, 'Justice for Windrush.' Members of the his generation, who are eligible, can apply for British citizenship through the Windrush Scheme, which offers free applications for eligible Commonwealth citizens who arrived in the UK before 1973. The scheme also applies to children of those individuals who arrived before 1973, if they were under 18 at the time of their parents' arrival. After speaking with the charity worker she explained that our client should not have had to pay this fee and will work with him to get it reimbursed. She also stated that his family members in London will also be eligible for a refund of the application fee.

Around the area – Bolsover

Case Study IIDB - Shirebrook

In early 2023, an Ex-coal miner came to see us at our Shirebrook Advice Centre for help challenging the disallowance of an Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) claim. His claim for the prescribed disease relating to osteoarthritis of the knees had been refused with a percentage award of 4% for loss of function. He had other IIDB awards which meant a 10 percent award for his arthritic knees would increase his overall IIDB **award to around £36.00 a week.**

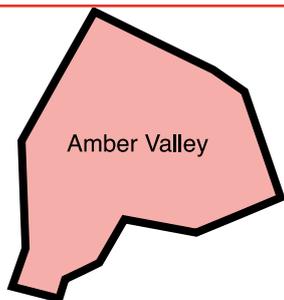
Firstly, we helped the man request a reconsideration, the decision came back unchanged. We appealed and the decision at a Social Security Tribunal in 2023 allowed the man's appeal and awarded him an extra 10%. At that point we thought the case was over until we received notification that the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), were questioning the date of the tribunal's decision. The written IIDB decision was sent back to the judge for correction, all of this was taking months and months with the DWP

further questioning other issues with the decision. We did make complaints to the Courts with the help of the man's Member of Parliament, about the time the whole process was taking. In the autumn of 2024, we received a decision from a District Judge setting aside the decision from 2023 and informing that a new appeal would have to take place as the previous tribunal had failed to consider a similar appeal decision dating back to 2011.

The new IIDB Tribunal took place in May 2025 and with our representations the appeal was allowed, 10% was awarded for loss of function. **This resulted in the man receiving a lump sum payment of IIDB in the region of £10,000.**

There were times when the man was so frustrated that he was ready to give up on ever receiving a favourable decision, especially after firstly winning his initial tribunal in 2023 and then having to wait a significant period of time to finally get the decision he deserved. With our support and encouragement he was able to get over the line.

Around the area – Amber Valley



The consistent support from Alfreton Town Council has meant, through hard times and better times, we have managed to maintain a presence in the town since 1993.

Our outreach offices at Somercotes, Heanor and Loscoe, as well as Belper, all with great support from town and parish councils, have supplemented the Grant given by the Amber Valley Borough Council. Colin Bennett and John Power have taken the bulk of the work in the Borough supported by our food, bank workers, Lindsey Nichols and Joanne Johnson. Jon Jarvis has also given support to the work that has grown significantly this year. Our effective form of advertising our services has been through social prescribers and general practitioners. 2237 people have accessed our services since 2014.

Case Study - Alfreton

A man's son attended our Alfreton office. He had completed an Attendance Allowance application for his frail and elderly father, but the DWP decided that he was not entitled. The client's son admitted that he had not provided much detail on the application form.

We completed a Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) request. After considering the MR, the DWP revised their decision and awarded Attendance Allowance.

This award means that the client's son can now claim Carer's Allowance as he spends at least 35 hours a week caring for his father and his net earnings are less than £196 per week. As the son is unable to work due to his caring duties, he claims Universal Credit (UC). Carer's Allowance will be deducted from his UC monthly award (so he will be no better off by claiming it), but he will receive Class 1 National Insurance credits and his monthly UC award will be increased by the £201.68 Carer Element. Furthermore, becoming a carer will remove his need to look for work, prepare for work and take-up job offers. When his father dies, his carer benefits will continue for 8 weeks to allow him time to recover before he is required to start looking for work.

Around the area – Amber Valley

Case Study - Belper

A man visited our Belper outreach, in an anxious state, seeking help as his claim for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) had been refused. His main health conditions were ADHD and autism, which caused him to over-think and over-complicate his application and subsequent medical assessment.

Our advisor found it to be quite challenging to convince him that the PIP system is only concerned with the degree of difficulty an applicant has with completing twelve specified “activities”. Some of these are more physical, such as dressing, and others are more mental health-related such as planning and following a journey.

We completed a Mandatory Reconsideration request, which is the first appeal stage. We helped the man to provide relevant medical evidence of his health conditions. Some months later, the DWP decided that they would not change their first decision. We completed an appeal application to an independent tribunal, which is the second appeal stage.

In legal terms, our client now became an appellant and the DWP a respondent to a court application. The DWP declined to change their decision and hence an appeal hearing was necessary.

On the day, the tribunal panel decided that the man was entitled to the enhanced rate Daily Living component and the standard rate mobility component amounting to **£139.60 per week** with backdating of **over £12000 to the date** his PIP application was made.

The man is happy with his award and the help we have provided along the way. Ideally, he should have contacted us before making his application as this would have made the process much less stressful for him (and perhaps our advisors too).

“Thank you so very much for your help filling in the attendance allowance form; I finally received it last week. I am certain that without your help I would not have been given the allowance. Thank you so much.” - PH Alfreton

Around the area – North East Derbyshire



Our outreach programme in North East Derbyshire has been very successful throughout the year. Using venues in Eckington, Grassmoor, North Wingfield, and Clay Cross, supplementing the work carried out in our main offices, we have gone from strength to strength. In Clay Cross in February, we brought our miners' strike exhibition as

well as working alongside the parish councils' warm spaces event.

Plans are now being made to stage Social Security benefits take up campaigns in Holmewood and Killamarsh as we try and make sure that no one is left behind. These sessions will be financed by the North East Derbyshire shared prosperity fund. The Henry Smith Covid support grant has also been used to maintain our services in the district.

The support of the parish councils has been crucial to the delivery of services and the number of people who have accessed our services since 2014 is 3382.

Case Study - North Wingfield

A North Wingfield woman who has two dependent children came to our outreach at the Community Centre. She reported deteriorating physical and mental health conditions in herself and health conditions in both children.

A Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claim and two child's Disability Living Allowance claims were advised.

The woman returned with the forms and with our help they were filled in and posted with medical evidence. A PIP award of enhanced daily living and mobility was awarded to mum and both children were awarded high care and low mobility for child's DLA.

The eldest child is now 16 and was migrated over to PIP again with our assistance and a PIP award of enhanced daily living and standard mobility was awarded.

Around the area – North East Derbyshire

Case Study - Stonebroom

A Stonebroom man visited our Alfreton office regarding his Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claim. He had received a letter disallowing his PIP claim having previously had an award.

The loss of his PIP, triggered the removal of a disability additional amount in his Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). All at once he experienced a significant reduction in benefit income.

We helped the man challenge the loss of his PIP. However, before his appeal was decided he received a call from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

They offered him a new PIP award that was still less than his previous entitlement; he refused the offer and we represented him at his appeal tribunal.

The man won his case on appeal, with his PIP awarded at the enhanced rates for both the daily living and mobility components.

This also resulted in the reinstatement of the disability premium in his **ESA award at £81.50 a week**, backdated for a number of weeks.

His new **PIP weekly payment was £155.60**, therefore, man was due **two backdated lump sum payments of benefit arrears totaling £12,298.10**.

“Myself and my family would like to say a big thank you for all your support, help and advice. We appreciate it.”

- M B Holmewood

“Hello to the team who helped with her PIP application. You were a great help to her when she needed it. Sadly she died the day after she was awarded it. Thank you for all your help.”

- DH Pilsley

User Feedback Survey 2025

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.

162 people completed the survey.

Waiting times

- 0–5 mins: 92 people
- 5–15 mins: 32 people
- 15–30 mins: 9 people
- 30–60 mins: 18 people
- Over 1 hour: 11 people

160 people responded that they would use our service again – one said they would not and one did not reply.

159 responded that they would recommend our service to family or friends – one said they would not and two did not reply.

Ways of hearing about DUWC

Each individual was asked how they had heard of DUWC:

- Family / Friends: 77 people
- Social Media: 10 people
- Trade Union: 1 people
- Referral from another service, including Jobcentre: 23 people
- Leaflet: 1 people

- Signage: 4 people
- Used Before: 29 people
- Other: 17 people

How users felt about the service

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

- Very Happy: 144 people
- Satisfied: 15 people
- Dissatisfied: 1 people
- Very Unhappy: 2 people

Issues that users felt the DUWC should organise campaigns around

The main issues that were affecting our users were problems with PIP Medicals, Assessments and unfair decisions. Next indicated were energy bills, food prices and cost of living. An array of benefit issues were highlighted including their complexity and low rates.

The temporary closure of Shirebrook Jobcentre was raised as well as disability awareness, digital exclusion and waiting times for Universal Credit payments.

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, Tuesday, Wednesday

9am – 11.30am and 1pm – 4pm

Thursday, Friday

9am – 11.30am

Brimington

Community Centre, Heywood Street

Monday 9.00am – 12noon

Hasland

Hasland Hub,

The Working Men's Club,

Hampton Street

Wednesday 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Staveley

Staveley Library, Hall Lane

Thursday

9.30am – 12noon

North Wingfield

Community Resource Centre,
Whiteleas Avenue

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 Road

Thursday 9.00am – 11.30am

Pinxton

Village Hall, Kirkstead Road

Monday 9.30am-12noon

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 2024/2025

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 2024/25

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 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 |
| Alicja Zon | Welfare Rights Adviser |
| 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.

