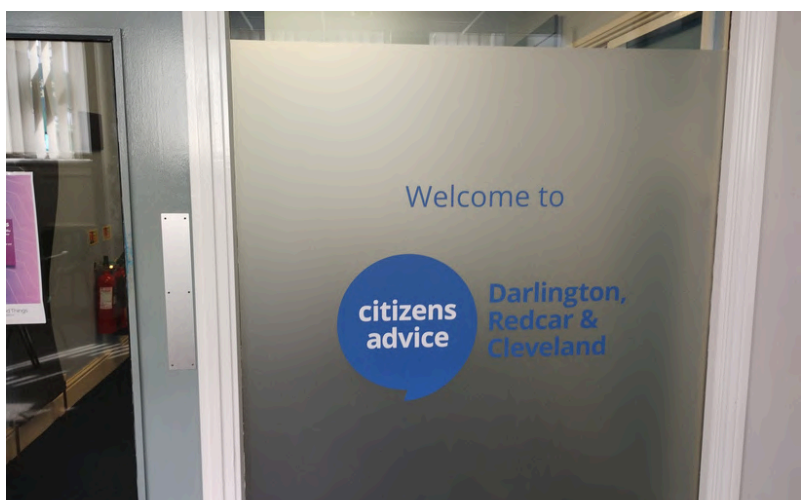
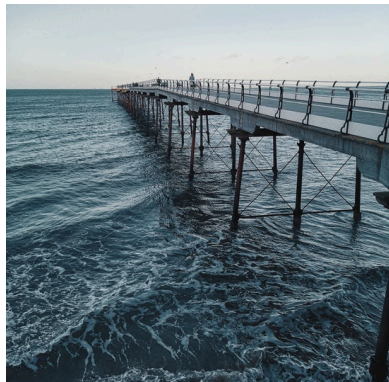


Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland

2023 2024

ANNUAL REPORT



WE ARE CITIZENS ADVICE DARLINGTON, REDCAR AND CLEVELAND

We aim to provide the advice people need for the problems they face and improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

We provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities.

We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.



Darlington, Redcar & Cleveland

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CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 24

When people seek our help, it is usually due to an immediate problem. The unpaid utilities bill. Unaffordable baby food. The month-end rent is due—that snapshot in time. What our Advisers seek to do is to look at the bigger picture. What are the events which led up to the client's problem? What additional problems might they face in the coming months? Very much like our financial statements, there are past and future events. All of that needs to be understood to give the client the correct advice. Particularly looking forward, if we can predict or anticipate some future problem arising for the client, then perhaps we can take action now to avoid or mitigate that problem.

That is perhaps the best part of Citizens Advice. The experienced Advisers have seen it (or something similar) all before. As the saying goes, prevention is better than cure. If we can do that, we will.



As always, I will close by thanking our staff and volunteers. The volunteers outnumber paid staff by a ratio of 2:1, and we couldn't operate without them. My colleagues on the Board are also volunteers. We all give our time freely because we care about our communities. Thank you also to our partner organisations, in local government and health care. Working together with common aims achieves a more positive outcome for the client.

Robert Murphy

Chair of Trustee Board



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

2023 - 24



Welcome to our 2023-2024 Annual Report. Due to the cost of living, demand for our services continues to rise, with higher expenses and tightened belts of funders and supporters. People are seeking help with increasingly complex and multi-faceted problems. I am proud of our staff and volunteer teams' commitment to delivering high-quality services. Similarly, the partnerships fostered with other organisations, including the Councils - Darlington Borough Council Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council have enabled even more impactful and efficient results for the people we support. Equally, I have been delighted to see the passion of volunteers and staff in their Research and Campaign work and in improving the policies and practices that impact local people's lives. A big thank you to our partners and supporters for their continued support and for helping us to meet best the needs of the communities we serve in Darlington and Redcar, and Cleveland.

Helen Howson

Chief Executive

Economic value of volunteering at Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland

Volunteer Roles	Equivalent paid job - Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2021/22	Hourly rate	Annual hours	Annual value
Generalist Adviser	Associate professional and technical occupations	£18.23	6,240	£113,755
Generalist Adviser Trainees	Administrative and secretarial occupations	£18.23	6,656	£121,339
Triage Assessor	Associate professional and technical occupations	£18.23	2,496	£45,502
Research and Campaigns	Associate professional and technical occupations	£18.23	1,248	£22,751
Advice Session Supervisor	Associate professional and technical occupations	£23.30	416	£9,693
Reception / Office Admin	Administrative and secretarial occupations	£13.44	2,236	£30,052
Trustee	Managers and Senior Officials	£26.79	832	£22,289
		Total	20,124	£365,381



Key Events

Exceptional Volunteer Award

Shelagh Blanchard won the exceptional volunteer award at the Stronger Communities awards in Darlington. Shelagh is one of our longest serving volunteers and it was truly deserved for her outstanding contribution to the community. During Shelagh's time volunteering she has advised over 2250 clients and secured over £3 million of benefits for clients. Shelagh is a massive support to the staff, volunteers and clients of Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland and we are over the moon that she has been recognised for her work.



Cost of Living Fund

Funding from the Government's Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund delivered by The National Lottery Community Fund, has helped Citizens Advice Darlington Redcar and Cleveland who are one of the many organisations at the front-line of dealing with the increase in the cost-of-living, to support people who are in hardship.



Employment Fund

Humankind Charity announced that a funding request on behalf of the Tees Valley Employability Partnership, led by Humankind to the National Lottery Community Fund, North East and Cumbria Region had been successful.

The partnership is made up of 11 Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations operating across the Tees Valley and sees three awards, totalling £1.3m for the LEAP project, which will be led by Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland, Humankind and Tandem.

This funding will see services delivered to individuals supporting them to improve health and well-being, become active in their communities, improve their financial situation and move into training, education or employment.



WHAT WE DO

Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland is an independent not-for-profit local charity, located in the heart of a market town and a seaside town in the Redcar and Cleveland unitary authority. Both sites are run by local people for the benefit of local people and managed by a board of volunteer trustees. It is also a member of Citizens Advice, the national umbrella body that provides a network of advice services without any direct funding to its members.

We provide a broad range of advice services ranging from generalist to our ever expanding, in demand, specialist areas: debt, welfare benefits, employment and financial services.

Each year we endeavour to reach out, with our services, to clients, who can't access us directly, around the Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland area: GP offices, churches, hospitals and partner locations, maximising service coverage, as funding allows.



DARLINGTON



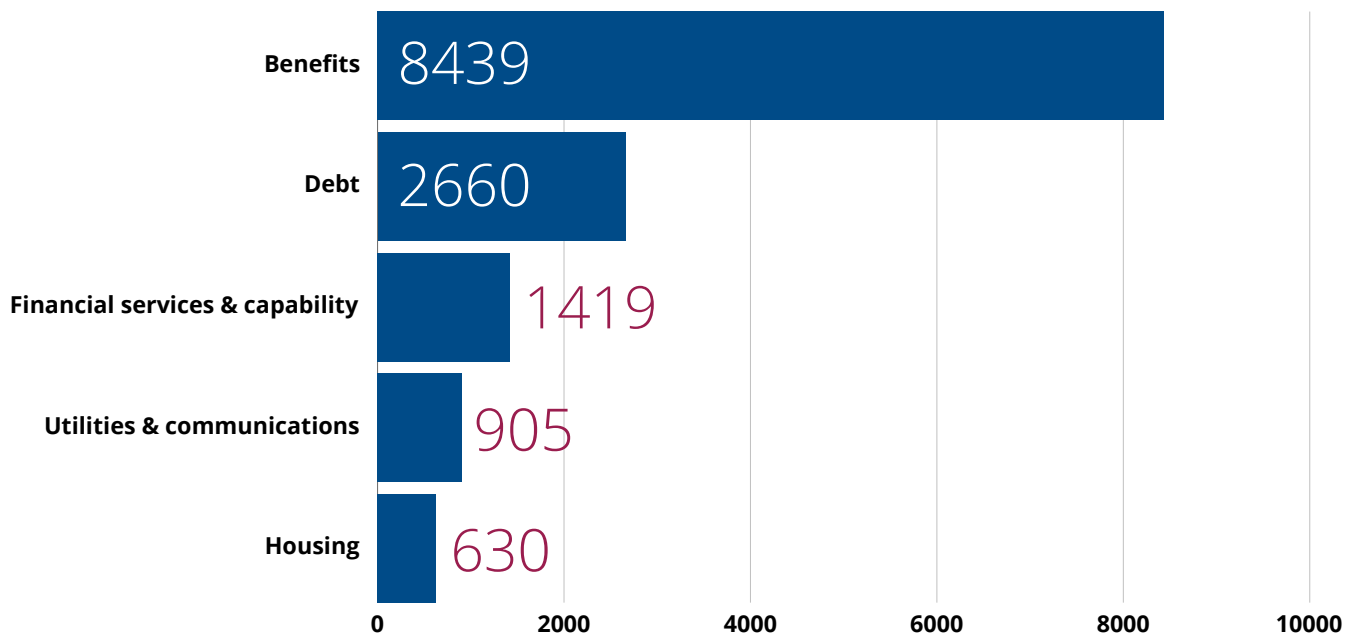
REDCAR



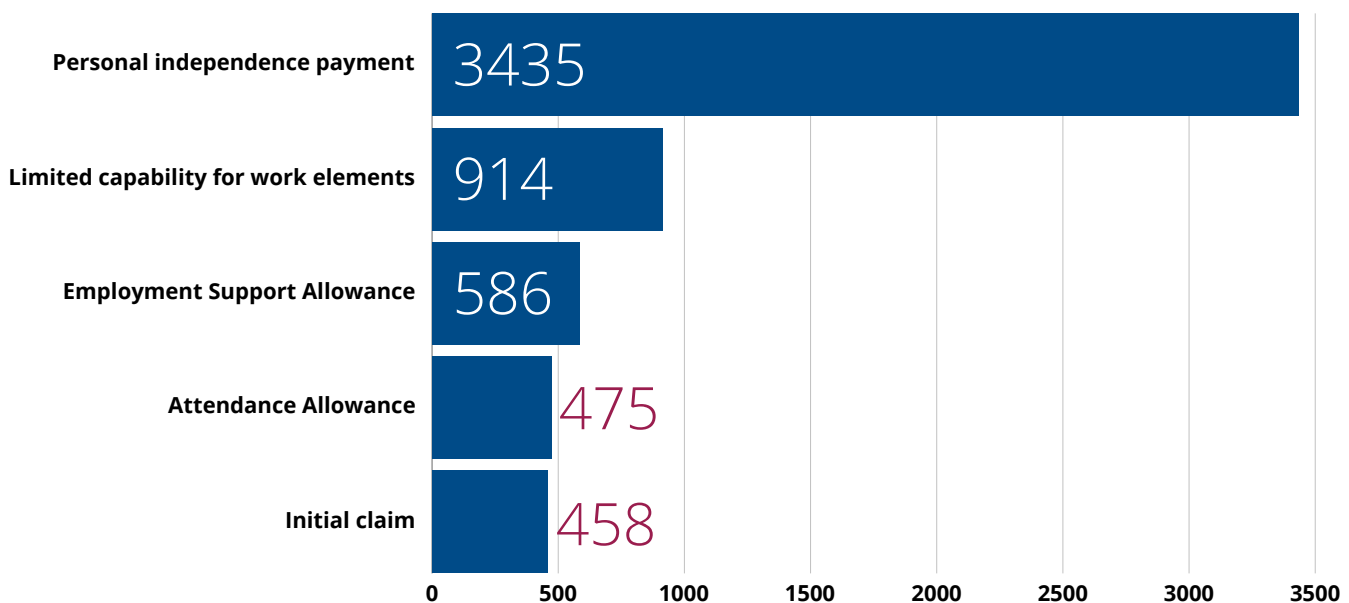
CLEVELAND

OUR IMPACT ON DARLINGTON

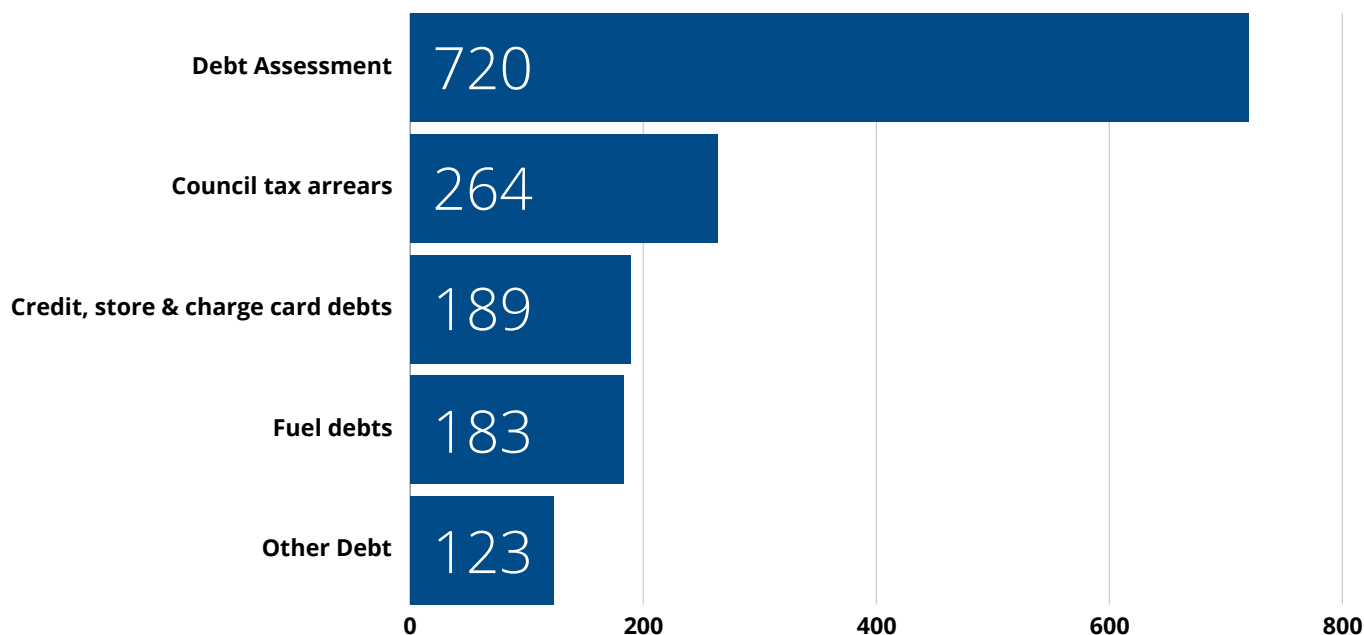
Top 5 Issues



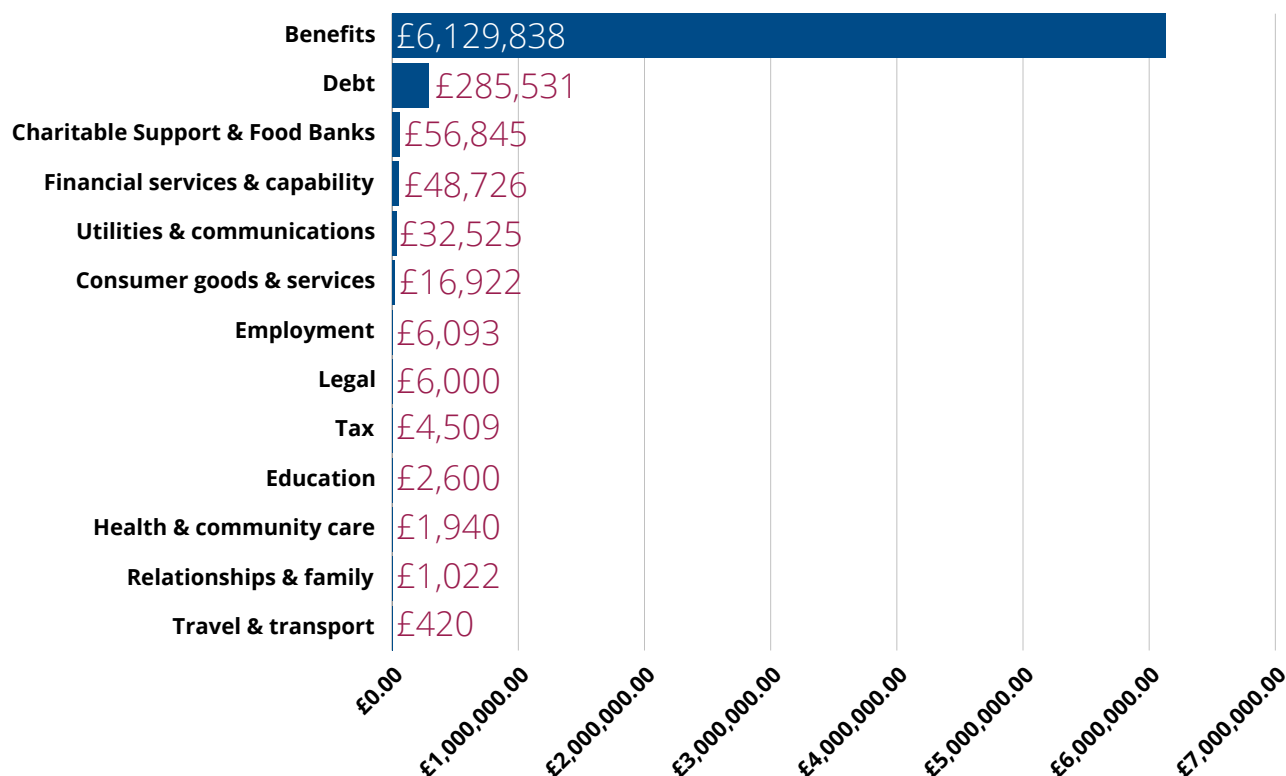
Top 5 Benefit Issues



Top 5 Debt Issues



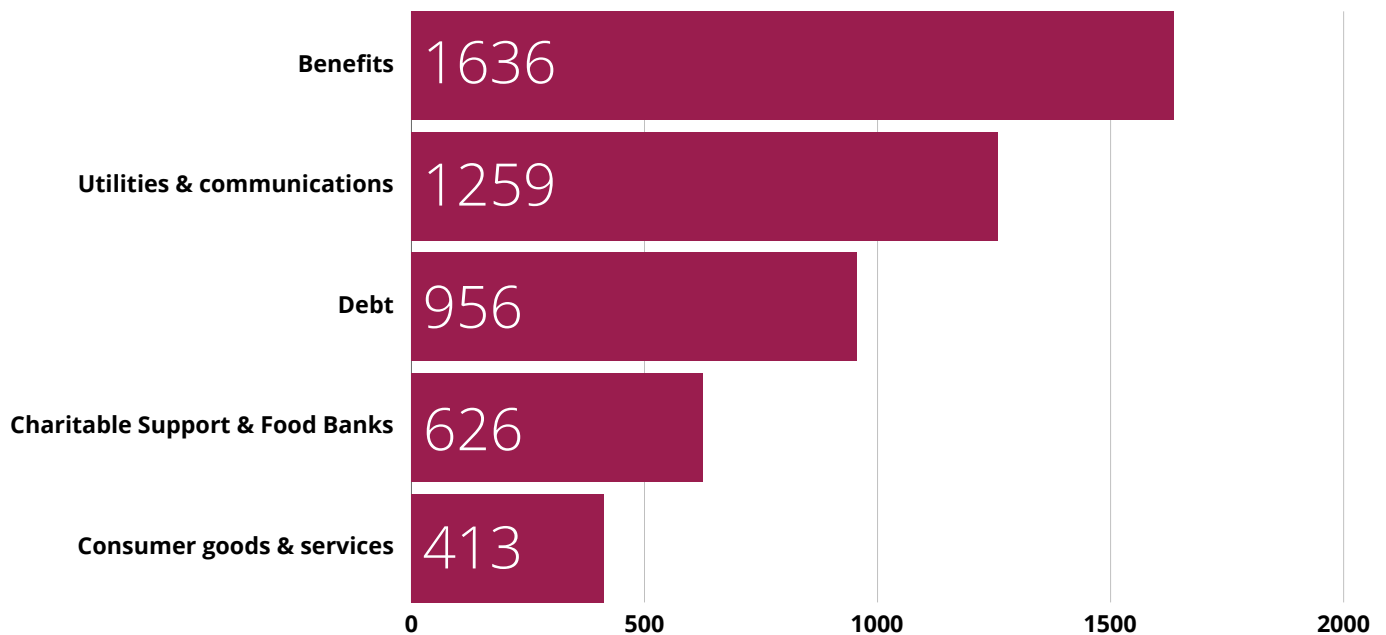
Financial Outcomes



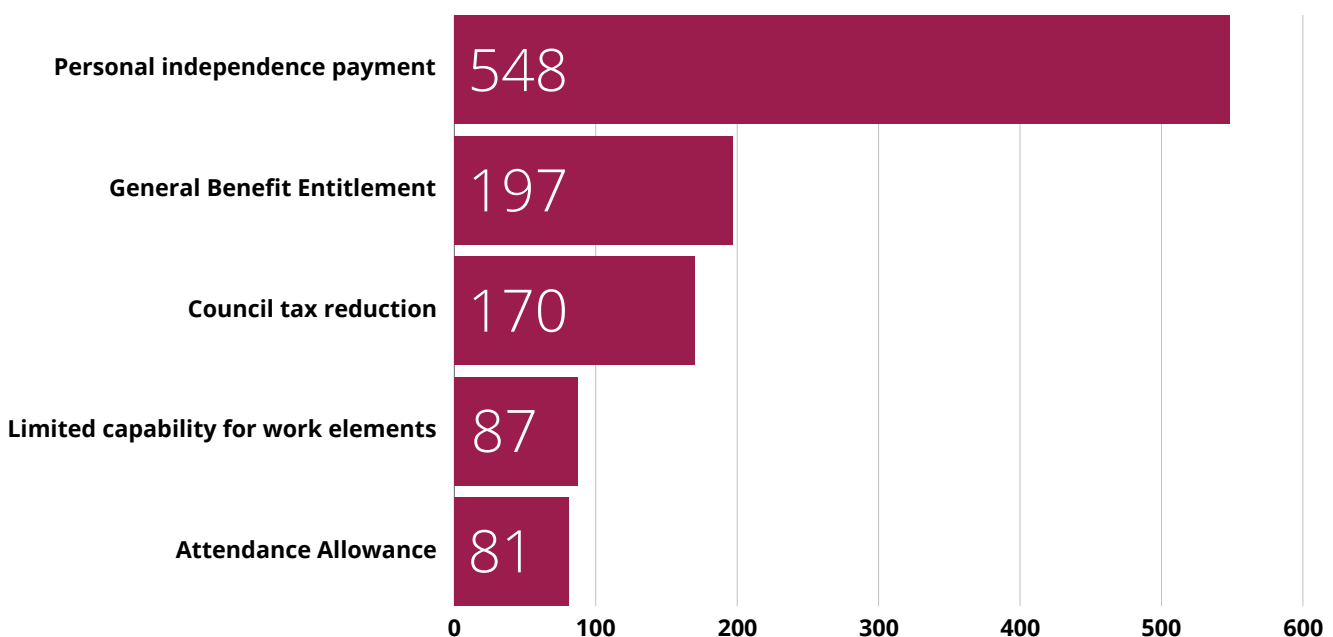
We supported and empowered clients in managing debts in total of £4,863,820. We helped by challenging these debts, negotiating with creditors for affordable, sustainable, repayments and assist with any court actions and insolvency options. The value of our work is in the result of enabling people to pay essential bills such as mortgage and rent payments and relieving stress, increasing wellbeing.

OUR IMPACT ON REDCAR & CLEVELAND

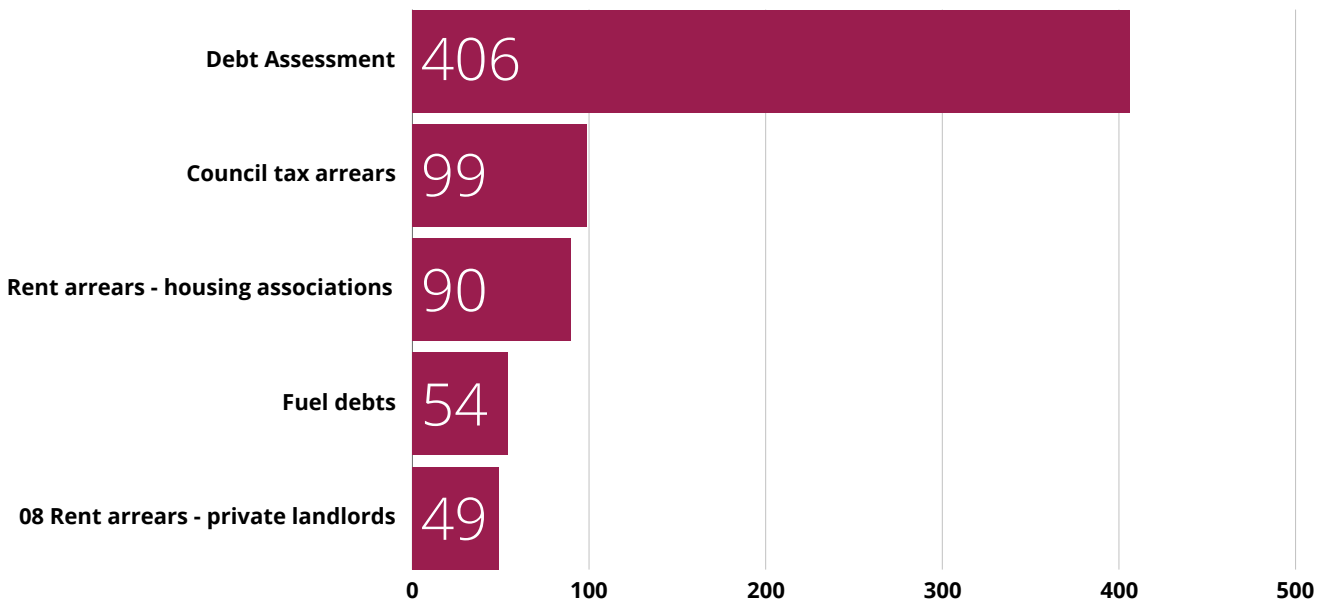
Top 5 Issues



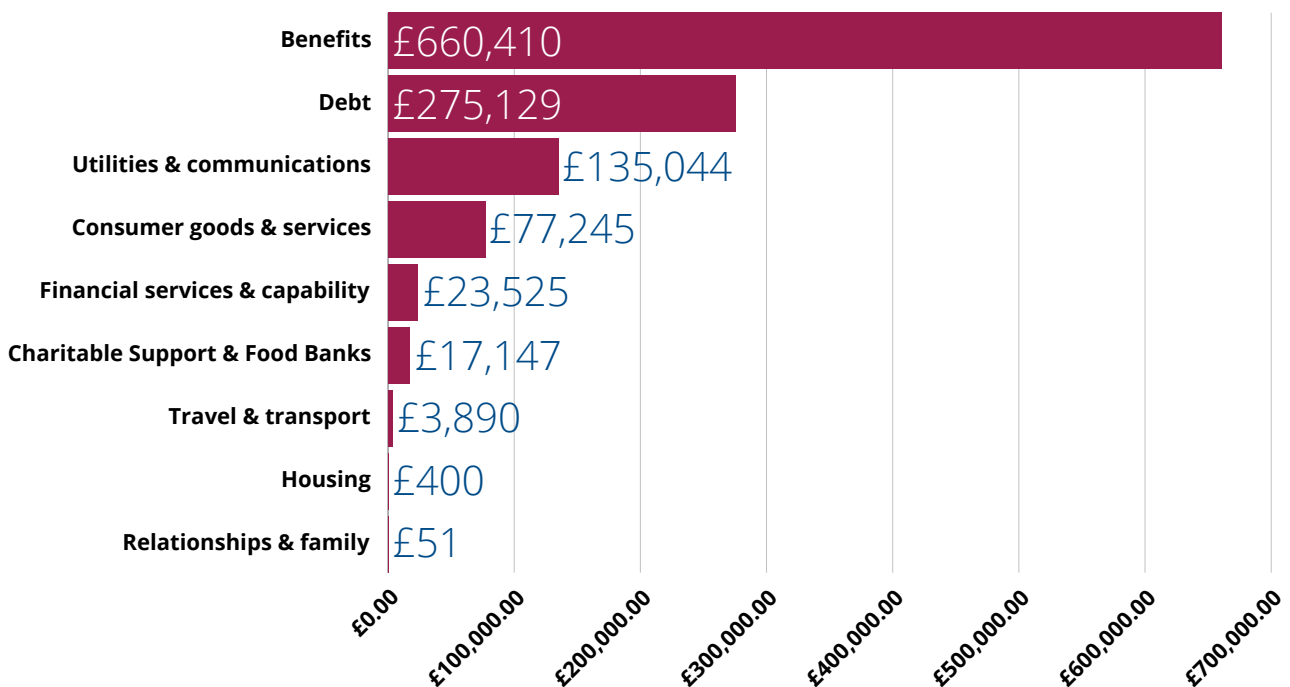
Top 5 Benefit Issues



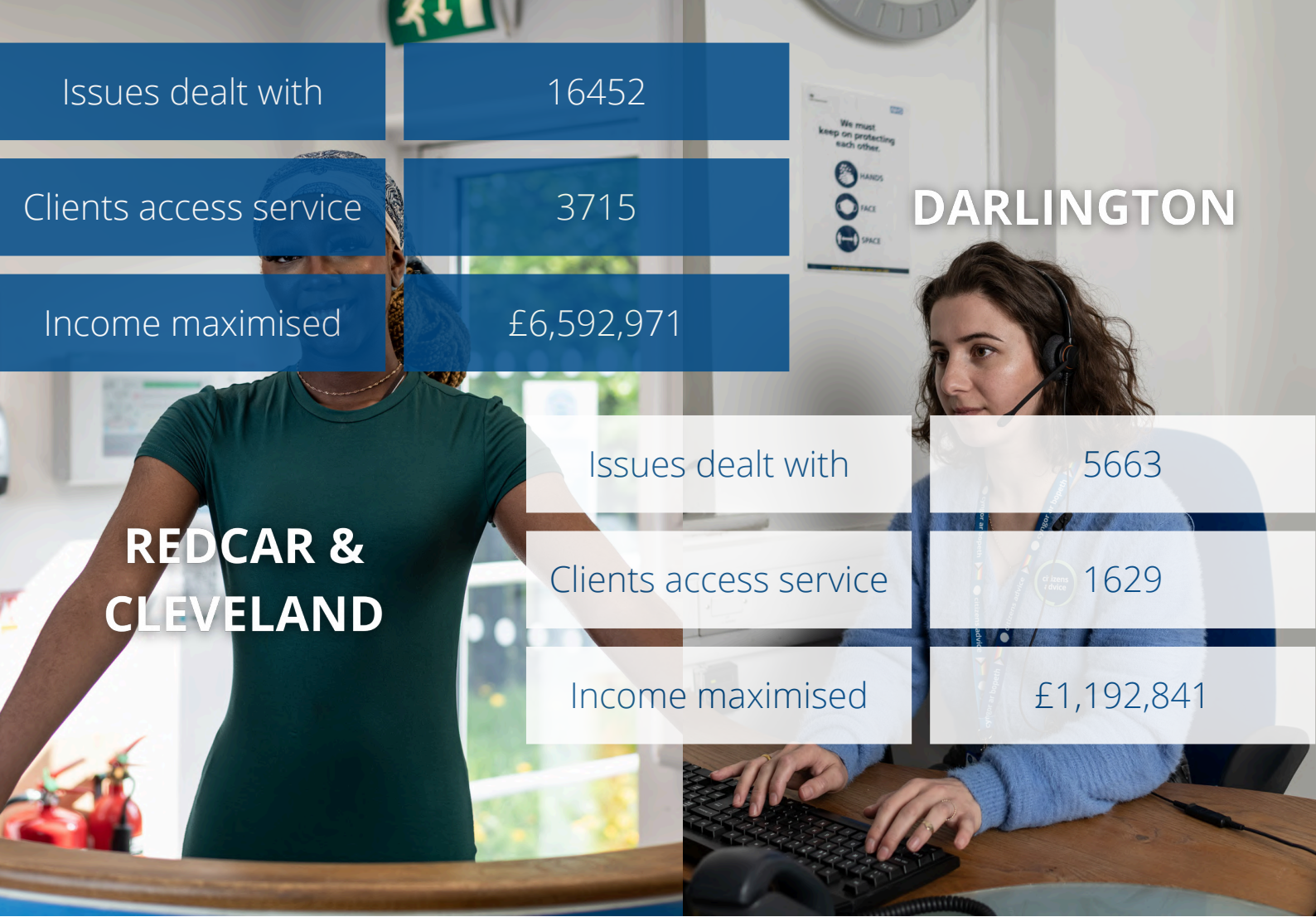
Top 5 Debt Issues



Financial Outcomes



We supported and empowered clients in managing debts in total of £1,707,375. We helped by challenging these debts, negotiating with creditors for affordable, sustainable, repayments and assist with any court actions and insolvency options. The value of our work is in the result of enabling people to pay essential bills such as mortgage and rent payments and relieving stress, increasing wellbeing.



Issues dealt with

16452

Clients access service

3715

Income maximised

£6,592,971

DARLINGTON

**REDCAR &
CLEVELAND**

Issues dealt with

5663

Clients access service

1629

Income maximised

£1,192,841

OUR SERVICE

Research and Campaigns We continually strive to:

- Increase local awareness of our campaigns.
- Be involved in Regional and National campaigns challenging discrimination and inequality.
- Share best practice about research and campaigns with other local Citizens Advice.
- Actively develop local campaigns about the issues that are really relevant to our residents.
- Engage with local partners and people of influence, including our MPs, on key national campaigns.

The team monitors the issues facing our clients and this gives us a unique opportunity to create an effective plan to support what is happening in the local community. We use our findings to highlight policy amendments that are needed to suggest changes and we strive to ensure the local community is aware of changes to their rights.

The team promote national campaigns each year:

Scams Awareness Week

Citizens Advice runs the scams awareness campaign in close collaboration with the consumer protection partnership. This brings together key partners in the consumer landscape to identify, prioritise and coordinate collective action to tackle detriment. Partners include Trading Standards and the Department for Business Trade (DBT)

We highlighted national trends:

- * Parcel delivery - asking for extra fees to deliver their item to then access bank details.
- * Banking scams - pretending to be the bank to state they have been scammed and to change bank details to allow them access to their bank details.
- * Online scams - paying for the item and never receive the goods.

National citizens advice highlighted that it was the over 75s that were the most commonly targeted and 87% were over the phone. We ensured we worked with Growing Old Living in Darlington [GOLD] to promote scams and prepared them how to recognise a scam, keep safe and report a scam.

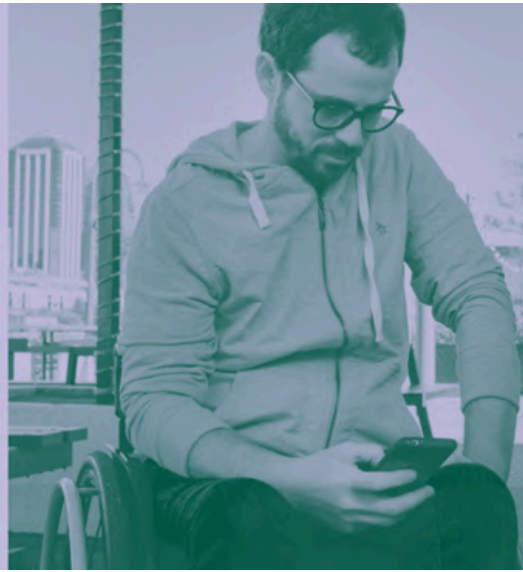


National Consumer week

This was an opportunity to raise people's awareness of specific consumer issues, to provide support and advice to those who need it. The campaign focused on making sure the seller delivered, how to protect yourself when online shopping and actions you can take if things go wrong. We spoke to all clients who used the service, we highlighted this to the over 50 community in the GOLD newsletter. We were able to work with clients who had been scammed to get their money back and educate them on recognising future scams.

Consumer Awareness is an annual campaign aiming to:

- **Raise awareness and understanding with consumers** on how to shop wisely, what to look out for, and what to do if things go wrong
- **Educate consumers on their rights**, particularly when shopping from online marketplaces
- **Empower consumers** to seek a remedy if things go wrong
- **Raise awareness** of where consumers can go if they need more advice and help with an issue



Energy Advice Campaign – A campaign that is ongoing to support the community to heat their homes.

This was an opportunity to raise people’s awareness of specific consumer issues, to provide support and advice to those who need it. The campaign focused on making sure the seller delivered, how to protect yourself when online shopping and actions you can take if things go wrong. We spoke to all clients who used the service, we highlighted this to the over 50 community in the GOLD newsletter. We were able to work with clients who had been scammed to get their money back and educate them on recognising future scams.

**Need energy
advice or
support?**

**Talk to one of
our advisers.**

The team promote regional campaigns each year

We worked alongside the regional cluster group of north east citizens advise services, we added our research from clients who accessed crisis support and we added surveys from local residents into the regional campaign 'Living on the Edge: North East' Report 2023

Living on the Edge: The North East



Citizens Advice Gateshead
Citizens Advice Hartlepool
Citizens Advice Newcastle
Citizens Advice Sunderland
Citizens Advice Northumberland
Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland

Introduction

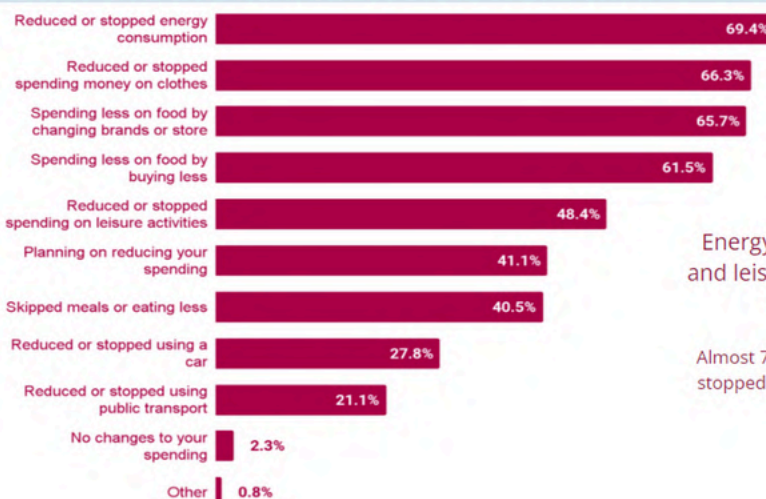
The UK has been in the grip of a cost of living crisis since late 2021. Wages and benefits have not kept pace with rapidly rising prices leaving **many people living on the edge**, and struggling to afford the basic necessities.

This rise in costs can be seen from energy to food, and from rent to mortgages. According to the Office for National Statistics, **91% of adults in Great Britain reported an increase in their cost of living** in October - November 2022.

However, low-income households spend a larger proportion than average on energy and food, so are more affected by price increases. **The cost of living crisis is affecting everyone, but it's not affecting us all equally.**

As a result, Citizens Advice offices across the North East have experienced an increase in enquiries linked to the cost of living and are seeing more people than ever who are struggling to cope.

Percentages of people who have taken the following actions against rising costs in the last 12 months, out of 353 responses:



Energy, food, clothing costs and leisure costs are the most frequently cut.

Almost 7 in 10 surveyed reduced or stopped their energy consumption.

Disabled People's Responses

Out of 168 people with a disability who took part in the survey.

People with a disability are **cutting their spending wherever they can**. Disabled respondents are **making more spending cuts across the board** compared to their non-disabled counterparts.

Significantly more responded with "buying less food", "eating less" or "doing all three" compared to the overall response.



70% are changing brands or store

69% are buying less food

51% are eating less or skipping meals



1 in 3 are doing all of the above



69% are reducing or stopping their energy consumption

43.5%

are planning further cuts in their spending



70% are reducing or stopping spending on clothes

Among those who responded to the question, **54%** (82 out of 154) **received the below support:**

Donation from a foodbank:

62%

Received a Universal Credit loan or advance payment:

33%

Support through Energy Company Social Tariffs:

33%

Received furniture that has been donated:

19%

Financial donation from a charity:

19%

Money from a local Crisis Fund:

19%

Money from the Household Support Fund:

16%

Support for People with a Disability

Significantly more people with a disability have sought a **donation from a local foodbank** compared to overall responses.

People with Dependent Children's Responses

Out of 113 with dependent children who took part in the survey.

The **North East** has now overtaken London as having the **highest rate of child poverty** of any UK nation or region. Almost 2 in every 5 children are in poverty*. The gap between our region and the rest of the country is growing.

These spending cuts pose a further risk to children and their parents.



70% stopped or reduced their spending on clothing

35%

are planning further spending cuts

65% are changing brands or stores

60% are buying less food

40% are eating less or skipping meals



1 in 5 are doing all of the above



4 in 5 stopped or reduced their consumption of energy

Among those who responded to the question, **58%** (61 out of 105) **received the below support:**

Donation from a foodbank:



Received a Universal Credit loan or advance payment:



Money from the Household Support Fund:



Support through Energy Company Social Tariffs:



Financial donation from a charity:



Money from a local Crisis Fund:



Received furniture that has been donated:



Support for Families

More and more families are relying on **pockets of discretionary funding and donations** to get by as their budgets don't balance.

Conclusion

Britain is facing its biggest cost of living crisis in decades. As the largest provider of free advice in the North East of England, Citizens Advice local offices are helping more people with crisis support, energy issues and not having enough money to make ends meet than ever before. **Certain groups of people are struggling more with the cost of living** than others - we continue to see more disabled people facing cost of living issues and **we're helping more people than ever that have not previously needed our support**, including people in work and mortgage holders.

Our Recommendations:

- **Support must continue for charitable organisations** who provide vital interventions and help people find a way forward.
- **Further targeted support** must be made available **for those on low incomes** and those with vulnerabilities, including those with disabilities.
- Ensure that means tested benefits provide **an income that sufficiently covers essential bills**, such as food, utility bills and basic housing goods.
- **Local Housing Allowance rates should not be frozen** for 2023/24. They should be reinstated to cover the bottom 30th percentile of renting costs.
- Energy companies must be stopped from **forcing people in debt on to prepayment meters**.
- Action must be taken to improve the **insulation of homes** across the country and **reduce bills** for the long-term.

The team put most of their time into local campaigns to help our community access timely advice and understand their rights. Here are a few:

Promoting Pension Credit

We visited local events, worked with the local authority, partner organisations and groups to promote Pension Credit. We tried to show how to dispel the myths about who can or cannot claim.

MYTH - I cannot claim pension credit I have £15,000 + savings ...

There is not a limit on your savings but anything over £10,000 means that a £1 for every £500 will be taken into consideration alongside your other income

MYTH - I have to go on- line to claim, I can't use a computer ...

You can apply on the internet & on the phone. Please call the Freephone number for the pension credit claim line 0800 99 1234

MYTH I own my own home, I won't get it...

Homeowners can get pension credit. Call the Freephone number for the Pension credit claim line 0800 99 1234 Give details of your income and they will help you decide if you can make a claim.

MYTH I get private pensions, I won't get it...

Pension Credit is your entitlement and available to anyone. We all have different circumstances We could be single, a couple, disabled, a Carer, looking after children There are different rates for pension credit depending upon your circumstances.

MYTH - I cannot claim until my partner is pension age...

This is true you can make a joint claim once you both reach pension age. But you may get Universal Credit as everyone has their own unique circumstances.

Call out to claim Pension Credit



Cost of Living Payments 2023 to 2024

We noted the enquiry areas for food and heating had increased, highlighting that hardship and debt was affecting the nation's health and affecting our community. We collated a questionnaire for clients to show how the one-off cost of living payments helped people to afford food and other essentials for a short time, or to pay some of their bills or reduce their debt. We used that information to apply for funding and support a campaign by Citizens Advice to increase the amounts paid to people claiming universal credit.

Example:

John worked for the same company for 10 years and he was made redundant due to the company failing to recover after the pandemic. He used his savings first, thinking he would find another job quickly, but this did not materialise. He had a mortgage of £600 per month, he was living off Universal Credit of £326 per month approximately; as a jobseeker. He wasn't able to get support with his housing costs for up to 13 weeks from the universal credit claim.

We helped him arrange a payment holiday with his mortgage company, we made arrangements with his utility provider to pay back arrears and we referred him into an employability programme to get back into work. During this time he utilised fuel vouchers, the local foodbanks and the "Bread & Butter Thing" accessing healthy food at a reduced cost per week.

John was helped to get back into work and increase his income. He stated he was at his lowest point in life, his mental health and self-esteem was affected and he could not see a way out. He said without the local community support networks and help from Citizens Advice to pay his bills, budget and help him get back into work, he would never have coped.



Lack of NHS dental appointments widen healthcare inequalities

In 2023, the Commons Health and Social Care Committee warned that there is a “crisis of access” to NHS dentistry, with unequal access across different regions, ethnic groups and socioeconomic groups. We noted an increased in clients unable to access a dentist due to closures or privatisation. We continued to explore next steps for clients, complete evidence forms for national citizens advice and promoted what to do/ who to contact if you cannot access a dentist.



Darlington Train station ticket office closure

The Government and industry announced they were intending to close between 940 and 1007 railway ticket offices across England This included our own local railway station in Darlington and it would affect those in the Redcar and Cleveland area. Our team from research and campaigns were of the view this this would have a significant effect on our local community and surrounding area and decided to set up a local campaign, producing a local report to add our concerns of its closure.

Nationally almost three quarters of a million people responded - 99% of which were objections. Making it the most responded-to public consultation of all time.

Our Research & Campaign team produced a petition and distributed it to our clients, staff, volunteers, friends and family in addition to local organisations and our Outreach surgeries to gain a cross section of the community. We asked them to tell us how the ticket office closures would impact them, if there were any specific issues would could cause a barrier to them using the new services once the closures were implemented. There was an option to respond via social media using hashtag #NotJustTheTicket. We designed a poster and displayed and distributed to all our contacts to advertise the campaign. We asked the local community to respond to the consultation, sign our petition and contact our local MP if they wanted to.

On Tuesday 31 October 2023, Secretary of State for Transport, Mark Harper announced the Government would no longer be following through on the Rail Delivery Group's proposals.

Ticket office closure scheduled for July 2023



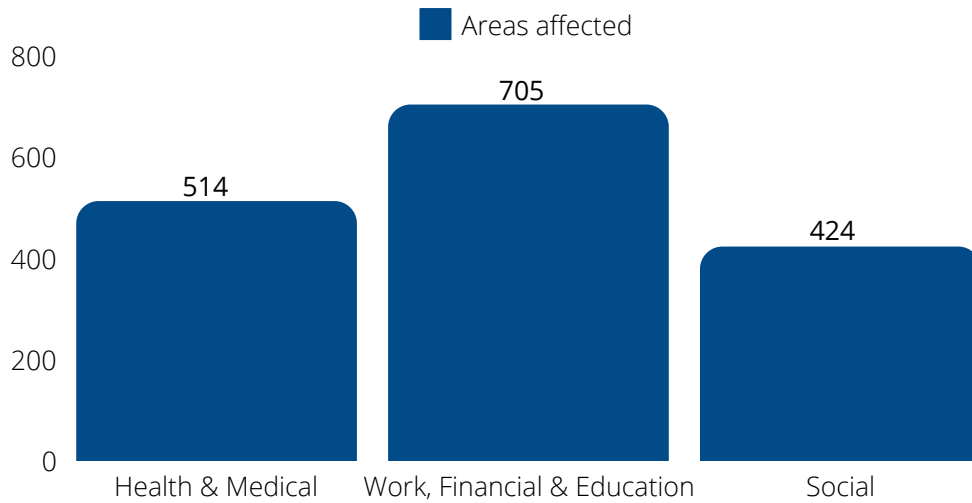
Bus routes stopped to West Park MH hospital

In June 2023, Arriva announced its intent to close a number of bus routes in and around Darlington. This decision was prompted by a 28% budget cut in the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, which reimburses bus companies for travel schemes such as bus passes.

A settlement was reached between Tees Valley Combined Authority and Arriva that would allow the majority of buses to continue operating as normal. However, a number of cuts remained in place. Particular concern is the closure of the Number 19 bus route which accesses West Park, the primary provider for mental healthcare for residents of Darlington. The closure happened and this meant that patients, staff and visitors travelling to West Park would have to walk over a mile and for almost an hour through a housing estate or along the main road, in order to access it.

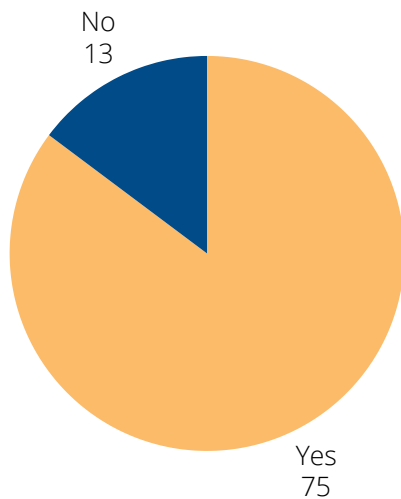
We collated a survey and had 102 responses within a few weeks. We focused on the facets of our clients' lives and what would be most impacted by bus closures. We divided our survey into three areas -health and medical, work, financial and education and social.

Impact of bus route closures

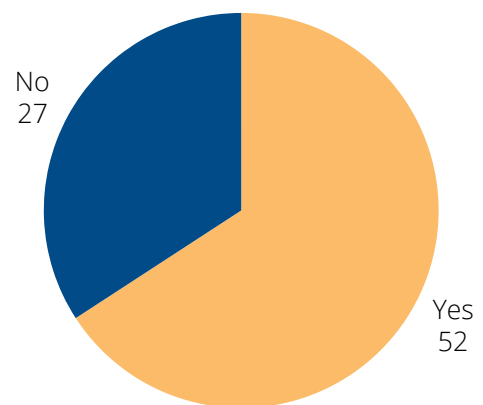


For our most vulnerable clients who require the services of West Park Hospital then, the closure of the direct bus route would put them at a severe disadvantage in terms of accessing mental health support as many of them have no viable alternative source of transport available to them and would disengage.

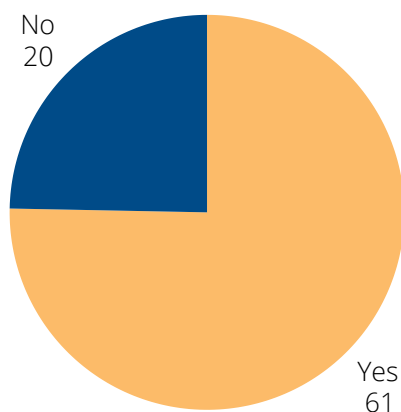
I can't afford any other means of travel e.g. taxi (fares)



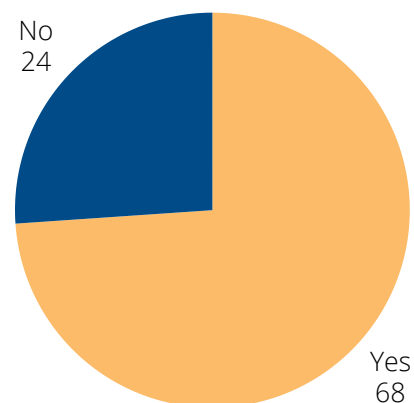
I don't drive, nor could afford a car



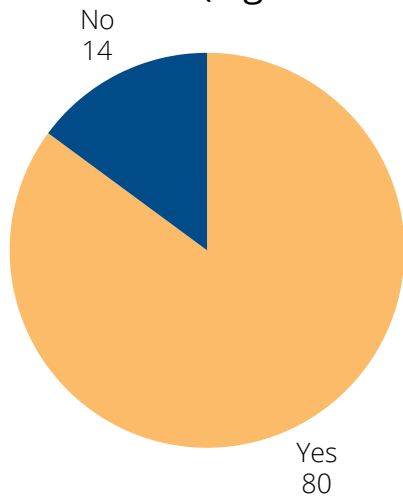
Cycling from where I live would be unsafe and not an option



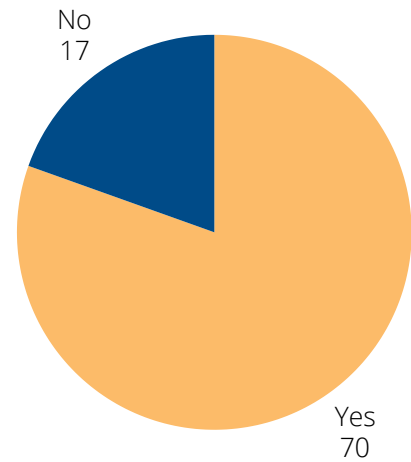
Would you have difficulty attending doctor appointments?



Would you have difficulty attending local hospital appointments (e.g. West Park)?



Would you have difficulty visiting family and friends (at home or even at hospital)?



We submitted our report to the relevant offices and a few months later another bus company now has access west park.



The impact of bus route cuts between Darlington Town Centre and West Park Hospital



VOLUNTEERS



Linda
Adviser



Edwina
Receptionist

Five months ago, the biggest pair of open arms welcomed me as I embarked on my volunteering journey. Since then, I have learnt that people from all walks of life, along with their wealth of knowledge, volunteer to support members of their community.

While the office can be a busy environment, I have found it can also be a place that connects you to the outside world. And, with no two sessions ever being the same, each day brings a different challenge. To date, volunteering at Citizens Advice Darlington has provided me with the opportunity to accomplish new learning goals that ultimately allow our clients to move forward successfully. It has not only sparked a sense of purpose in me but has motivated me to widen my range of knowledge, brought an awareness of compassion and understanding, along with emotional values that support our ever-changing world.

I started volunteering after I retired. A friend once asked me why I give my time, when I could be relaxing. The answer was clear, it keeps my mind active, it gives me a purpose, I like the sense of fulfilment when we help other people and I meet lots of interesting folk.

As a newcomer to the area, I was originally based in Scotland, volunteering has helped me to understand my new community and meet new people.

If you have any spare time give it a whirl, I have been here just over a year, I started with no prior knowledge, I have enjoyed each day and the challenges it brings. I am now supporting another volunteer with their training and enjoying every minute.

You just need a willing heart to help others, you will get training and full support, whether you want to be an advisor, work on reception, support the Benefit and Debt teams or join the research and campaigns team.



Phil

Receptionist

I am a veteran of the Royal Anglian Regiment, this time 4 years ago when we set up the veteran's group there were 5 of us, but now I am the only one attending the Darlington Armed Forces day, I give my total respect to those that have gone before us. I have volunteered at the Darlington Citizens Advice Office since 1969. In the earlier years I volunteered as a Board Member, but changed that role to enable me to look after my wife when her health deteriorated.

During my time caring for my wife, to give me some respite and spend time speaking with other people, I attended the Darlington Office daily for 30 minutes in the morning and in the evening. I would record and organise the incoming/ outgoing post. I would visit all the offices and over the years got to know all the volunteers and staff and enjoyed supporting everyone. It was a lifeline to me.

My wife sadly died in 2014, but I continued to volunteer. Then after the pandemic I changed roles to volunteer on the reception desk 5 afternoons a week. I enjoy helping people who visit the centre or over the phone to find a way forward, to get the support they need.

In all the years I have volunteered, it has been a pleasure to work with the other volunteers and staff and I would highly recommend it. You may say I have given a lot of support to the service, but in return it has helped and supported me during my life changes.



Steve

Adviser

My background was in resources and HR for a large company. When I took redundancy I had time on my hands and a friend suggested how much they had enjoyed volunteering at Citizens Advice. I completed the induction and training with a lovely bunch of people and a handful of us are still volunteering 10 years later.

I find the volunteer role as a Triage worker rewarding, I assess a client's circumstance and either give information or I ensure the best person for their problem helps them. I would definitely say prior to volunteering, I was oblivious to the issues affecting my community. My knowledge of local issues has increased, I now understand and recognise the great service Citizens Advice and other charitable organisations in the town provide to support people.

I often recommend volunteering at Citizens Advice, every day is different, meeting clients or other volunteers, who share their life experiences. You can volunteer in different roles and it's a good feeling to know you have helped someone. It's a friendly environment and someone is there to help with training, share ideas or just help you out.

I would add if local companies gave employees time out to volunteer, it would benefit both employer and employees, by improving a workers' mental health, help them develop valuable skills and bring experience and knowledge of their local community needs back into the business.



OUR WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

Health Services



Darlington

Clinical Commissioning Group

GP Surgery Outreach

The seven GP surgeries we attend hold the appointments, if you have a doctor in Darlington, you can access any of the surgeries we visit.

If a patient has a health diagnosis it can affect their everyday life. A short term or chronic illness can cause stress, worry and anxiety. It can affect a person's self-esteem, cause social isolation, loneliness. It can lead to anger, frustration and grief for their inability to live the way they did prior to the illness. Having to deal with your condition and how it makes you feel is impacted by finances, reduced income, claiming the correct benefits, managing money, debt, housing costs and employment concerns. We work alongside the doctors and in-house teams to work closely supporting the patient to deal with complicated benefit systems, employment and housing law addressing the impact issues to help them concentrate on recovery.

Macmillan

The Macmillan service is based at Darlington Memorial Hospital and they hold the appointments. We offer telephone, face to face, email and home visits, the choice is up to the client. Our Macmillan workers deal with complex cases and have repeated contacts with the clients to support them through their cancer journey.

As people face the impact of cancer or have a family member with cancer, we support them to deal with their finances, claiming benefits, challenging benefits, debt, employment concerns, and housing options. We apply for grants and financial support to ensure the basic need of heating and a healthy diet is accessible.

West Park/Lanchester Road Mental Health Services

The team works alongside the ward staff doctors, social workers and care coordinators to help patients, family and carers, to prepare and support patients due to be discharged back into the community and up to 3 months after being discharged. We ensure they can engage with outside support agencies or local citizens advice to ensure they have someone to reach out to in the future. A patient mental health deterioration has led them to being vulnerable and needing support and reassurance. They can have multiple complex situations due to disengaging with services which leads to issues with benefits, employment, falling into arrears with bills or homelessness.

Community Care Support



The Community Support Scheme is a discretionary scheme which exists to help Darlington's most vulnerable qualifying residents. There are two forms of award that can be made:

- Crisis Support - For urgent need for support due to the consequence of an emergency, disaster, unforeseen circumstance where a household has insufficient resources to meet the urgent need that poses an immediate and substantial risk to their health and safety.
- Community Care Support - To help people remain in the community or move back into the community after a period in supported or unsettled accommodation.

Both awards have a pre- cursor assessment to consider the cause, impact of the situation and to look at income maximisation. The team will also look at other in-house services as a preventative measure or help the client deal with the underlying or impact issues caused by the situation.

Benefit Entitlement Action Team/ Darlo Millions

The team deliver at outreaches across the community to ensure the hard-to-reach groups are able to access financial support. This service supports residents in the community to access timely support to enable them to organise their finances, maximise their income and help them to deal with money to live affordably.

This is an integral part of the cost-of-living crisis, where fuel, food energy and housing costs have risen. The current cost of living, medical wait times or lack of health services is having a huge impact on public health; we see the rise of claims for disability benefits.

The increased living costs and fall in living standards will continue to affect people's physical and mental health and exacerbate existing health conditions. Clients have seen an increase in their outgoings which has meant many are cutting back on essentials needed to lead a healthy life.

Older peoples programme GOLD



The team aim to provide older people living in Darlington with information to empower them to make choices, update them on scam awareness, energy support, and entitlements. We strive to give the over 50's a strong voice in the community, a brighter, active and more positive outlook to help them to improve their quality of life. We also have some fun along the way, arranging the annual Tea Dance in the market square to gather the community and partner organisations together to celebrate life.

Money Advice Team- In Darlington, Redcar & Cleveland

The team take referrals from partner organisations, other colleagues and self-referral to ensure the local community is supported with their finances. The team is an integral part of the service. We are an approved service for debt relief orders and insolvency.

The team collates a plan with the client to strategically support them to first look at ways to prevent or challenge the debt. They try to maximise their income, look at ways to save monies, cut back on income and negotiate with creditors. They then support the client through the pathway to consider their options to deal with their debts.

Cost of Living Project

This project aimed specifically to increase remote service delivery to give remote advice to the hard-to-reach clients in the community to help them cope with the cost of living. This was achieved by over 60% phone and also email, chat and video call. The team considered income maximisation, government support schemes, local partners and in-house projects to help with essential costs like food, energy and help with accessing any benefit or grant entitlements.



Lottery – LEAP Project



As part of a wider Tees Valley initiative, moving participants closer to the labour market with interventions and removing financial barriers to work and volunteering. At Citizens Advice we provide income maximisation and financial capability services to support beneficiaries.

Lottery - Client disbursement



'Way Forward' project aimed at supporting residents in need due to the cost-of-living crisis. As well as addressing hardship and crisis, we provide longer-term solutions by ensuring people are receiving all the help they are lawfully entitled to.

Saltburn Solidarity – Redcar & Cleveland

Working in partnership with Saltburn Solidarity to deliver Advice sessions at their foodbanks. Clients who attend the service now have a full assessment of their needs considering the presenting issue, underlying issue and impact issues that lead them to the food bank, The clients receive timely benefit advice, income maximisation, debt advice, housing and employment advice. We utilise other in-house services to ensure they are supported to access specialist advice in different legal areas.

MARAS mortgage and rent arrears service – Redcar & Cleveland

The team work closely with Housing Services and the local authority to secure and/or maintain safe sustainable and affordable housing. They do this by affordability checks, money advice, legal work to prevent evictions and working with local landlords, lenders, housing associations, the council and other services.

Energy Projects

This year we have delivered energy advice for:

EAP the energy advice project-

We help clients lower their energy bill, make energy efficiency savings, advise on mould and reducing damp, register with priority services, understand and challenge their bills, understand smart meters, and access grants and support available to obtain boilers/ insulation and/or repairs and ensure benefit uptake.

CMAF carbon monoxide advice project-

We supported clients to understand carbon monoxide dangers, remove carbon emissions & supported the client to understand the effects signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. We also offered help to access priority services, the fuel poverty network extension scheme and offered carbon monoxide detectors. Working alongside EAP they also received help to access benefit and money advice.

EOP the energy outreach project-

The aim was to give light energy advice to local groups in the community to allow them to understand how to save on energy, access grants and support and reach out for full energy advice and support.



Names have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

CASE STUDIES

GP Surgery

Amanda 62 was an asylum seeker 10 years ago, she had been trafficked to another county and fled due to physical and sexual abuse and she now has indefinite leave to remain. She is in receipt of Employment Support Allowance support group and gets housing and council tax benefit. She has a diagnosis of a heart condition, sight impairment, psychosis, depression and memory issues all related in some way to the previous abuse. The client presented with a refusal for PIP due to not meeting the points, she also had rent, council tax arrears and electric arrears. She has been to the local foodbanks but feels too embarrassed to return and has gone without eating or turning the heating on when she runs out of money.

In the short term we held recovery on her debts under “breathing space” and referred her to our inhouse debt team. They arranged affordable repayments and achieved backdating benefits and a discretionary housing payment to reduce the rent arrears. We applied for council tax exemption for severe mental impairment and had this backdated to wipe of the council tax arrears.

We contacted her energy supplier to challenge the bill and it was reduced then we referred her to our energy advice team to help her afford to heat her home by cutting back with useful tips and accessing a grant for a boiler. We referred her to crisis support for gas and electric top up and a food voucher to see her through until her next pay day. We then supported her to budget and manage her money.

We supported the client with mandatory reconsideration for PIP, gathered evidence from the GP surgery and she was awarded standard rate care and low mobility. We also applied for her a concessionary bus pass.



Lottery a way forward

Pamela presented as struggling financially. She had been her elder son's carer claiming carer allowance and received a top up of universal credit for housing costs. When she became a pensioner 1 month ago they stopped her Carer Allowance and Universal Credit. She claimed her state pension. She was struggling with her health and paying her rent and council tax.

We noted she had £203.85 state pension but no pension credit eligibility She had not claimed housing costs from the local authority or informed council tax support of her new income so the account was on hold. She thought if she could not get Pension Credit then she could not get any other help.

We helped the client make a claim for housing costs with backdating and restarted the council tax support and we helped her apply for a discretionary housing payment. We helped her to make a claim for Attendance Allowance which would be £72.65 per week, once awarded she will get Pension credit of £81.50 because she lives alone and no-one gets carer allowance for looking after her.

In the interim we gave the client £50 food voucher to tide her over to her next payment of State Pension and a fuel voucher. The client was very grateful for the interim support of food and fuel and further support to obtain benefits to change her circumstances.

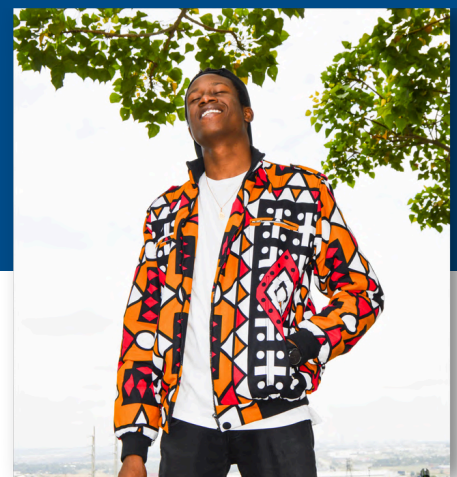


MH services

We met Robert after he had been in hospital 8 weeks, he was too poorly to engage prior to this and had no next of kin who we would usually work with. Robert is homeless, aged 22 with a diagnosis of psychosis. He got into rent arrears due to his inability to concentrate, engage with bills or receive help from other services. He had been evicted due to not paying his rent. This was due to him not informing Universal Credit of a change of circumstance so they stopped his claim pending him attending the office and stopped payments to his landlord.

We were able to:

1. Challenge /gather evidence to re- instate the Universal Credit claim, keeping the Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity component. They also paid off the rent arrears that were on hold to the landlord, which took away the arrears. This allowed him to avoid court action for recovery and enabled him to apply for local authority housing and supported living.
2. We supported him to get breathing space to deal with his debts, arranged a debt appointment to challenge any debts and arrange a repayment plan. The team got evidence of his health condition and applied for backdated council tax exemption due to severe mental impairment and the arrears were wiped off.
3. We challenged a PIP Mandatory reconsideration that was over the 1 month to respond time limit. We showed good cause and found evidence to ask for a late mandatory reconsideration. He was awarded enhanced daily living and low mobility due the need to be supervised. He has no insight into his condition changing, he is unpredictable in his reactions and does not self-care or take nutrition to an acceptable standard.
4. We referred him to Homegroup who also work on the wards, they supported him to access supported accommodation. Due to the work we had done, to write off debts, reinstate his benefit, apply for council tax exemption, he was able to afford this. They set up direct payment for rent to the landlord.



Debt Services

Colin contacted the service about a court hearing he had for the following week regarding his Council Tax arrears. Due to the amount of time without payment, the Local Authority had scheduled a committal hearing in the Magistrates Court which could have led to imprisonment if he did not attend and come to a suitable arrangement.

Colin is retired and lives alone in a privately rented property. He was in receipt of the State Pension and an occupational pension when he first spoke to us. Colin advised of a number of health issues. He had previously suffered a stroke as well as having heart problems and COPD. In addition, he is diagnosed with PTSD, anxiety, depression and struggles with alcohol dependency.

The Council Tax debt had accumulated over 6 years and was around £7,000 at the time Colin approached us for help. He advised that this occurred due to him having difficulties managing his money and was also partly because of the amount of money he was spending on alcohol due to his addiction. The worry about the upcoming court hearing had understandably had a further negative effect on Colin's mental health. Our debt team initially helped Colin to apply for the 60 day Breathing Space scheme which ensured that the court hearing was put on hold and therefore a more detailed evaluation of his situation could be completed.

Colin was referred to local services for further support regarding his mental health and alcohol issues whilst it was also identified that his health conditions meant he may qualify for Attendance Allowance. He received assistance from our benefits team in making an application for this and the claim was successful. In addition, the Attendance Allowance award meant that he became entitled to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support which our debt adviser applied for on his behalf and helped to further improve his financial situation.

Due to this increase in available income, we were able to assist Colin in making an affordable payment offer to the Council Tax debt prior to the rescheduled court hearing. Thankfully the Local Authority agreed to accept this and therefore further enforcement action was prevented.

Colin was extremely relieved that the situation was resolved in a satisfactory manner and grateful for the help received from us in negotiating a payment arrangement in addition to the other assistance provided in improving his overall financial circumstances.



Crisis Support

'Gail' is 22, she is unable to work due to her health and is a single parent living with her son aged 7 months in a Local Authority rented property. She came to our drop-in session for advice and had been triaged before speaking to the Community Support Team for Crisis Support with gas, electric & food. Gail has been struggling for some time but recently lent £200 to a 'friend' who promised to pay it back but has since disappeared.

During the Triage assessment with the Generalist Adviser Gail had applied for Child Benefit which can be backdated for 3 months. She was also advised about claiming Discretionary Housing Payment and will be doing that, with support at another Drop-In session. We discussed applying for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) as she is already claiming the Limited Capability for Work related Activity element of Universal Credit. We discussed the process and support available to complete the PIP form. Gail will arrange an appointment for support once she has made the initial phone call for the application form.

We also suggested that she ask, via her Universal Credit journal, about reducing the £33.34 taken for Advance Repayment due to her financial hardship, so that she will pay less each month but over a longer period which will be more affordable for her. Gail now understands about not lending her money as she needs to be able to ensure that she can provide for her and her son.

Gail was given Gas and Electric Top Ups, an Energy Voucher to supplement the top ups as both meters were well into the emergency credit and £100 Food Vouchers from Lottery Funding. Gail was very grateful for all the support given today as was her Mum.



Community Care

'Ted' is a single person aged 35 who is currently unemployed but seeking paid work. Ted suffers with anxiety and depression. He applied for help with some items of furniture and a fridge freezer as due to a relationship breakdown, Ted had to leave the family home and has been staying in temporary accommodation but he has now secured a private rented flat. However, this is only part furnished and has no carpets and Ted is not able to afford to buy the items as he is on a low income.

Ted advised that he is unable to leave his home unless someone is with him, but does not feel that he is ill enough to claim Personal Independence Payments (PIP). We reassured Ted about his eligibility for PIP and he agreed to be referred to our Benefits team to support him with the process and application form. Ted is currently on medication and we confirmed that his GP has given him the Crisis Team number as well as The Samaritans contact details.

We awarded Ted a 2-seater sofa, drawers, double mattress, bedding, fridge freezer and a saucepan set. We were also able to help Ted with two large rugs under Glasspool's Flexible Frontline Fund. Ted was extremely grateful for the items awarded as he says this will make his home more comfortable and a better place to live. This will enable him to move from temporary accommodation to a more suitable property, will improve his living conditions and prevent a serious deterioration to health within the home.



Food bank

We received a referral from the Welfare Rights Team at the Council and from a Social Prescriber for 'David' who is 42 years old and lives alone in a Housing Association rented property. He is unable to work due to his long-term mental health issues. David's Universal Credit had been sanctioned following a mental health breakdown resulting in him being unable to leave his home for a period. Welfare Rights were supporting him to dispute this decision but he required support with food in the meantime for himself and his cat.

We contacted David, issued him a food bank voucher and arranged to meet him at Brotton Foodbank to explore how else we could support him. £20 of cat food was also purchased for David's cat.

At the foodbank we explored the issues David was having and found that as well as the problems caused by the benefit sanction he also had some debts including council tax, gas and electric and mobile phone debts totalling around £5,000. We provided budgeting advice to David to look at areas where he could save money on his bills which would help now and after the sanction was lifted. We completed a debt assessment and arranged an appointment with our specialist debt team to go through David's options with him and support him to put his chosen option in place. A hold on action was arranged with the Council for the council tax arrears pending his debt appointment.

We completed a benefits check and identified that it did not appear David was receiving limited capability for work and work related activity and explained the claiming process for this. This could increase his income by £416.19 per month. We also discussed David's entitlement to PIP and how to begin the claim. It was estimated he would be entitled to standard rate daily living and mobility which would increase his income by £101.35 per week. David was encouraged to return for support to complete the UC50 and PIP2 forms when they were received. We advised David about local income maximisation schemes available including the Household Support Fund.

David contacted us after the initial meeting to explain that his mobile phone had broken and he was unable to speak to the DWP to progress his benefit situation as a result. We contacted Footprints and were able to source a mobile phone and a sim card which will enable David to keep in touch with the DWP, his support network and the organisations providing help to him; we ensured everyone was informed of his new contact number. David is now in a better position and feels supported to get back on his feet and resolve the issues that have been affecting him.



Mortgage and Rent Arrears Service

Rose is a single person aged 24 and she is currently living in the property with her 6 year old and 4 year old children. She lives in a three bedroom Beyond Housing property and she suffers with some health issues which consist of depression, anxiety and dyslexia. She receives a lot of support from her grandmother due to her dyslexia.

Rose was referred to us from RCBC Homeless section and Beyond Housing as they are proceeding to possession action due to non-payment of rent. We completed a benefits check with Rose and we have identified she may be entitled to PIP due to her health issues and we discussed how she would apply for PIP and that we could offer assistance in completing the PIP application.

We identified that Rose is currently in receipt of universal credit, child benefits and a small wage from work. We also checked as to whether Rose had any further priority or non-priority debts and she stated that she did not. We completed a financial statement with Rose and identified that she did have some money left over so as to be able to make an offer of repayment to Beyond Housing for her rent arrears.

Also as part of the financial statement we discussed budgeting and that she could reduce her monthly outgoings. Rose stated that she wanted to make an offer to Beyond Housing of £100 pcm off the arrears and one off lump sum payment of £1000.

As Rose is working we checked she had the correct tax code and we confirmed this was the case. Rose states that she will be able to maintain the repayment arrangement agreed with Beyond Housing via standing order when she gets paid and due to receiving full housing costs paid from UC LHA she should not incur any further arrears. Beyond Housing have agreed to stop possession action based on the agreement and the one off lump sum payment. So with budgeting and the possibility of her income increasing due to PIP it is affordable to maintain the property going forward.



Mortgage and Rent Arrears Service

Kaitlyn is a single person aged 52 and she is currently living in the property with her three children aged 17, 15 and 31. She lives in a three bedroom Beyond Housing property. She states that she has some health issues which consist of anxiety and depression.

Kaitlyn was referred to us as she has rent arrears which has occurred due to the shortfall she has between her rent and UC LHA. Due to the amount of rent arrears owed Beyond Housing had proceeded to eviction action.

We completed a benefits check with Kaitlyn and identified that she may be entitled to personal independence payment, UC LCWRA. We discussed the process of claiming these benefits and what help we are able to provide with assisting completing the application forms.

We identified that Kaitlyn is currently in receipt of council tax support and is currently in receipt of Universal Credit, UC LHA and child benefit. We also checked as to whether Kaitlyn had any further priority or non-priority debts and she stated that she did not.

We completed a financial statement with Kaitlyn within the appointment and identified that she does have a shortfall with her rent and due to the income and expenditure that she would meet the criteria for discretionary housing payment. We completed this application with her so that if this was awarded and the fact that she already has an Alternative Payment Arrangement where her rent is going directly to Beyond Housing she then should not incur further arrears.

Also as part of the financial statement we discussed budgeting and arrears that she could reduce her monthly outgoings. This then means that she is able to make an offer of £33 pcm off the arrears to Beyond Housing. A referral was also made into the homeless section and due to her circumstances, they looked at and awarded a one off lump sum payment towards her arrears for her to remain in the property.

Kaitlyn was confident with the increase in her income with the benefits that had been discussed and budgeting it would be affordable to stay in the property and continue to maintain the arrangement set up with Beyond Housing for the arrears.



Mortgage and Rent Arrears Service

May is a single person aged 31 she is currently living in the property with her 12 year old daughter. She lives in a three bedroom Beyond Housing property and she has no health issues.

May approached us as she did have an arrangement set up with Beyond Housing previously for her arrears but due to the rise in cost of living she had missed two payments. And now that she had defaulted on the arrangement they were proceeding to eviction with an eviction date set.

We completed a benefits check with May and she is currently in receipt of all the benefits she is currently entitled to. We identified that May is currently in receipt of universal credit, child benefits, council tax support and has a wage from working part time. We also checked as to whether May had any further priority or non-priority debts and she stated that she did not.

We completed a financial statement with May within the appointment and identified that she does have a shortfall each month but states that her mum and dad are helping her with paying some of her bills.

Also as part of the financial statement we discussed budgeting and that she could reduce her monthly outgoings. May stated that she wanted to make an offer to Beyond Housing of £100 pcm off the arrears. Due to the eviction date being set we completed a N244 to ask for an emergency hearing and EX160 fee remission form within the appointment. We sent an email to Beyond Housing and the RCBC Homeless section to make the offer of repayment. But due to there being a deadline of returning the forms to the court we advised May to return the forms to the court that day so that an emergency hearing could be granted before her eviction date.

May was also given Watson and Woodhouse details so that she could contact them for them to provide assistance and the emergency court hearing.

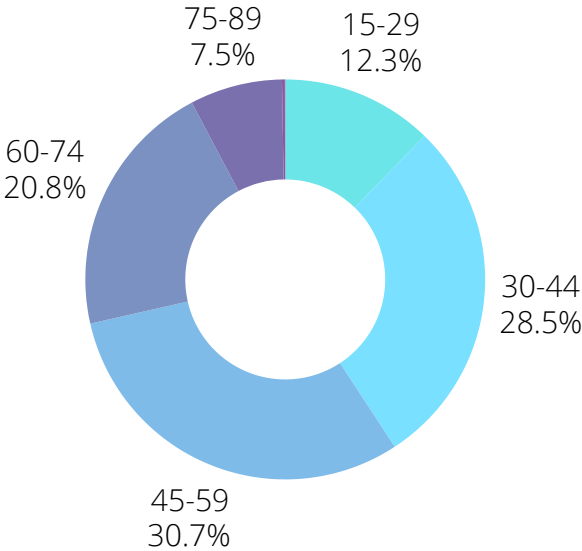
As May is working we checked she had the correct tax code and we confirmed this was the case.

May was confident with budgeting and assistance from her mum and dad with dealing with her finances that she would be able to afford to maintain the offer made to the court for the arrears and was happy to set up a standing order so that she cannot default on the payment. Also she has now set it up so there is an Alternative Payment Arrangement in place so her rent goes straight from UC to her landlord so that she is unable to incur any further arrears.



CLIENT PROFILES DARLINGTON

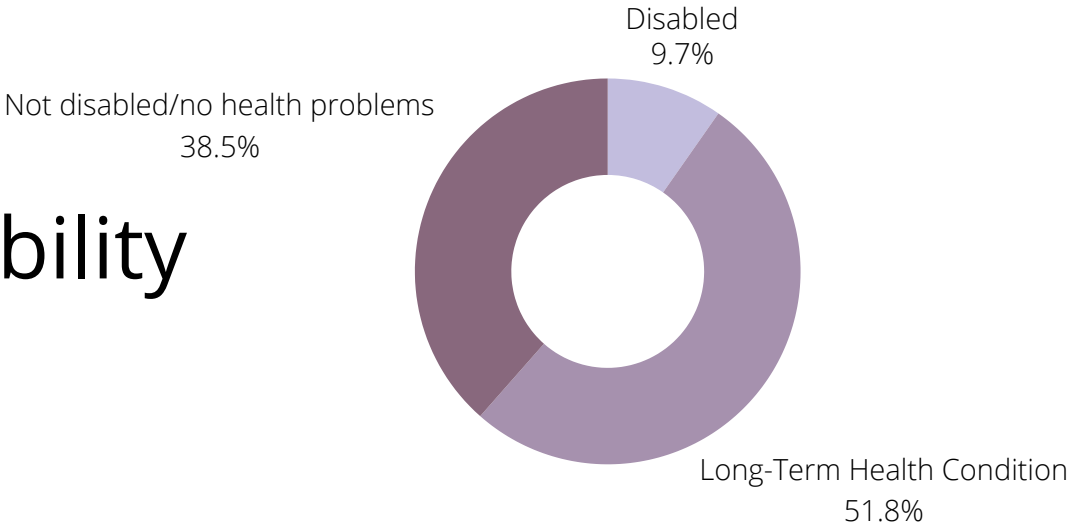
Age



Gender

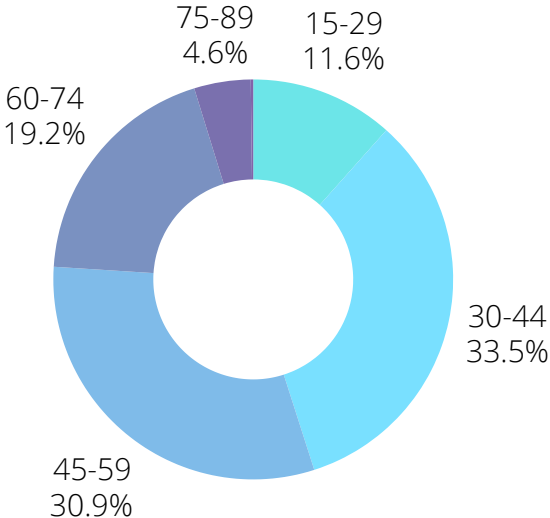


Disability



CLIENT PROFILES REDCAR & CLEVELAND

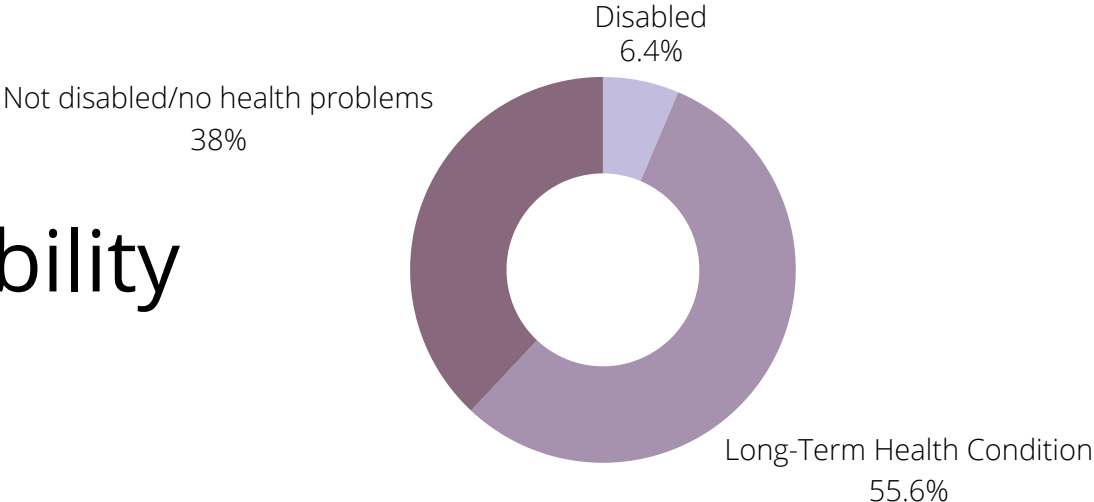
Age



Gender



Disability



CLIENTS COMMENTS

“Visited Citizens advice bureau in Redcar recently. Very impressed with the amount of information given to us by very friendly, well informed staff. It's such a relief to find people who can help with the Benefit process.”

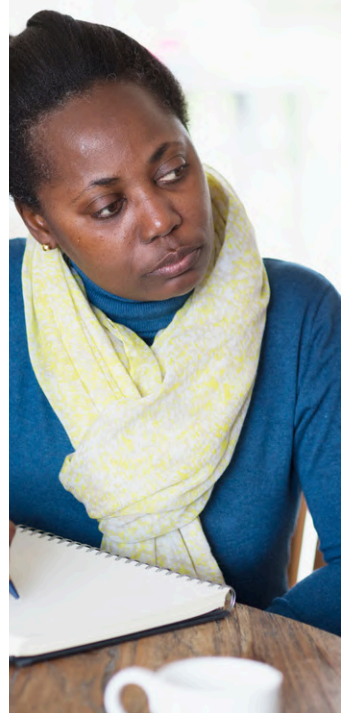
“Helpful friendly staff and volunteers.”

“The advisor (Tracey) was very good and professional. I am going back there on Wednesday to get form completed. Would recommend to anybody. Thank you.”

“They help very much we hen it comes to filling documents out and very friendly staff.”

“Excellent free service from people genuinely wanting to help.”

“Plenty of people here who know what they're talking about, I got the info that I needed so I would recommend.”



“The staff are very helpful aswell as getting you to help yourself. Working together with the Citizens Advice can be very beneficial. Helping with debts, community care grants, advice on civil matters and much more.”

“Alison was very helpful with an energy voucher and advised me on looking for work - I am now working in a care home.”

“Attended a pre booked appointment this week with a member of staff at the Redcar office . The lady was extremely knowledgeable and provided me with so much helpful information.”

“I became upset during the appointment and was treated with such kindness. I have been given a follow up appointment to help with other issues. I can't recommend this service enoughloads of information available and really lovely and helpful people.”

“Totally free, genuine, concise advice. Ordinary people helping ordinary people. Most excellent.”

“The only place to have given me the best and complete advice. No other org could help with my situation CAB all in one.”

“Very helpful service will be recommending to friends and family.”



STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. The maximum liability of each member is limited to £1.00. Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association as amended on 28/03/2013.

Wider network

Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland is a member of Citizens Advice, the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux. It adheres to the principles of the national network, and is audited on the quality of advice and its organisational structure.

Risk management

The Board has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and where possible has established systems to mitigate these. Internal risks are minimised by the development and implementation of policies and procedures, including those on health and safety, cash handling, IT, complaints and grievances. These are reviewed periodically to ensure that they meet the organisation's needs.

Organisational structure

Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland has a Board that consists of up to 15 members. This meets quarterly. There is a finance committee and an operations committee, which make up the Board; from time to time, working groups are established to address specific issues: for example, health and safety, tendering, building and equipment. Membership of such groups may include staff, volunteers and others who can assist the organisation. The Board may also establish consultation forums and focus groups. Responsibility for implementing the strategic development of the organisation is delegated to the Chief Executive, who ensures that the organisation delivers the services specified and that it meets its key performance indicators. The Chief Executive manages a team responsible for the day to day running of specialist and generalist advice provision.

Recruitment/appointment of new trustees

The directors of the company are also Charity Trustees for the purposes of Charity Law. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association the

members of the Board are elected to serve for a period of three years after which they must stand for re-election at the next Annual General Meeting. The directors have drawn up a set of role descriptions and person specifications to cover the varied requirements of a balanced board. In order to achieve this broad skill mix, candidates are asked to indicate their areas of expertise and complete a skills assessment. A Board recruitment panel considers all applicants and invites them to a panel interview. Appointments to the Board of Trustees are by co-option or election.

Induction/training of new trustees

The organisation runs a programme of training, which all board members are expected to attend. New Trustees are taken through an 'induction pack' to ensure that they are fully aware of Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland principles and their responsibilities to the organisation.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Funds held as a custodian

Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland also manages a client account for the Local Authority as a custodian.

Public Benefit of Citizens Advice

The charity's aims and achievements set out have been undertaken within this report. The activities set out in this report have been undertaken to further the organisation's charitable purposes for the public benefit. The Trustees have complied with the duty under Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charities Commission and the Trustees have paid due regard to this guidance in deciding what activities the charity should undertake. The organisation's main objective is the promotion of any charitable purpose for the benefit of the community in Darlington and surrounding areas by the advancement of education, the protection of health and the relief of poverty, sickness and distress.

Statement of Purpose and Strategic Objectives

The Citizens Advice service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice and counsel to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland aims to:

- Provide the advice people need for the problems they face;
- Improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives;
- Train all workers to provide an accurate, high quality client centred service;

Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland provides services that work to:

- Inform people about the law and how it affects them;
- Advise people of the possible options available to them and the potential consequences of different courses of action;
- Listen to and support people as they consider and decide what to do;
- Assist people in pursuing their chosen course of action;
- Influence those responsible for policies and services by recommending changes based upon people's experiences.

Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland Key Objectives:

- The maintenance and development of high quality client-centred service
- Increased partnership working as a means of meeting client expectations
- The provision of support and advice, particularly for clients with the greatest needs
- To maintain effective governance and increase the reputation and profile of the organisation in Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland area.
- To build upon the commitment of the staff through effective recognition and personal development strategies
- The development of a finance strategy that supports the aims and aspirations of the organisation and its long-term viability

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

We hold contracts/Service Level Agreements with a range of statutory bodies that recognise the value of advice in improving health and wellbeing. We are grateful for the investment in the charity outreach providers, which continues to ensure that we provide a more co-ordinated service for vulnerable hard to reach clients. The number and range of sources provides us with a diversified financial base to ensure the charity is robust and not over dependent on any one source of funding. We are committed to robust financial planning and to this effect we maintain a projection of income for at least three years ahead and will ensure that this continues to be derived from as wide a variety of sources as possible.

Incoming resources for the year were £1,245,552 of which £1,041,432 related to restricted activities. A surplus of £135,485 was generated throughout the year.

DATA PROTECTION

Information Assurance - Statement of Internal Control

The organisation Trustee Board has approved a new Information Assurance Strategy, having identified the risk presented by the significant amounts of client data held in the organisation. An Information Assurance Management team exists to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of all our sensitive data assets is maintained to a level which is consistent with the requirements of our clients, our funders and our strategic partners.

The organisation aims to achieve an appropriate level of compliance to the Data Protection Act, the Cabinet Office's Security Policy Framework and to industry best practice, as defined by the ISO 27000 series of standards.



BIG THANK YOU

Would like to says a **big thank you** to our supporters and funders:

**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**
RIGHT THERE WITH YOU

NHS
Darlington
Clinical Commissioning Group


the Money
Advice Service
Free and impartial money advice


northern
cancer
alliance

LEAP 
What will your next step be?


County Durham
Community Foundation


advice
quality
standard



Funded by
UK Government



WHO'S WHO

Reference and administrative details

Charity name: Citizens Advice Darlington,
Redcar and Cleveland

Charity Registration: 1112414

Company Registration: 5562437 (England
and Wales)

Registered Office:

The CORE
Church Row
Darlington
Co. Durham
DL1 5QD

Chief Executive: Helen Howson

Company Secretary: Hazel Thompson

Senior statutory auditor

P W Lamb FCA DipPFS

Auditors

Allen Sykes Limited
5 Henson Close
South Church Enterprise Park
Bishop Auckland
Co. Durham
DL14 6WA

Bank

Barclays Bank Plc
27/31 High Row
Darlington
Co. Durham
DL3 7QS

Solicitors

Latimer Hinks
5-8 Priestgate
Darlington
Co Durham
DL1 1NL

Trustee Board

Date of appointment within the given year
(DA)

Date of leaving within the given year (DOL)

Mr. L McLeman (Vice-chairman)
Mr. R Murphy (Chairman)
Mr. D Byers (DOL) 15/11/2023
Mr. P Pimm
Mrs. C Flintoft-Smith
Mrs. B Buckle
Mr. M Redhead
Mr. M Head (DOL) 15/10/2023
Mr. C Payne
Dr. M Betterton
Mrs. M Fairley (DA) 15/11/2023

WE HAVE VOLUNTEER ROLES IN YOUR AREA

All sort of people volunteer with us and for many different reasons, but one thing that unites them all is that they find it challenging, rewarding and varied.

It's a chance to make an active difference to people's live in your community.

Volunteering with us offers you:

- a chance to meet new people
- new skills
- an opportunity to contribute to your community
- full training
- enhanced employability skills.

We have roles including:

- telephone assessor
- adviser
- charity fundraising
- trusteeship
- customer service
- campaigning
- publicity
- administration

Contact details:

training@citizensadvisedrc.org.uk

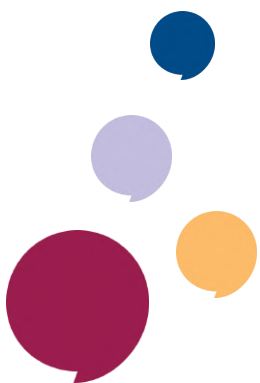




Darlington, Redcar & Cleveland

**We provide free, independent,
confidential and impartial
advice to everyone about their
rights and responsibilities.**

**We value diversity, promote
equality and challenge
discrimination.**



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Company limited by guarantee No. 5562437
Charity Registration No. 1112414
Authorised & Regulated by the Financial Conduct
Authority FRN: 617578

