

Key Statistics - Citizens Advice Cheshire North in Macclesfield

Q4 2021-22

citizens
advice

Cheshire North

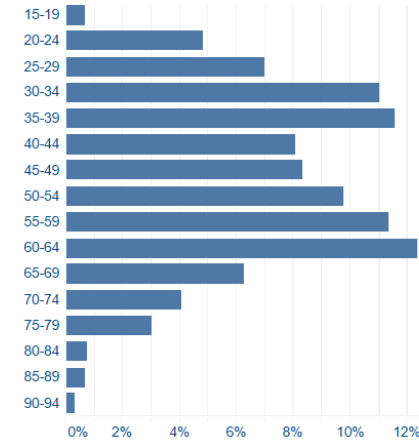
Clients	955
Quick client contacts	
Issues	1,638
Activities	1,513
Cases	945

Outcomes

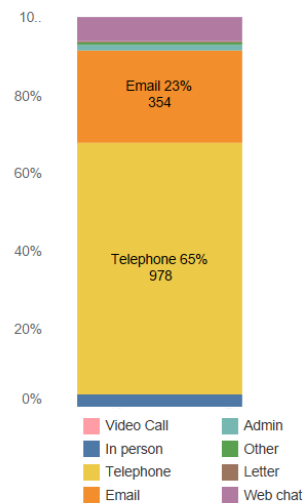
Income Gains - £116,692

Debts Written Off - £43,871

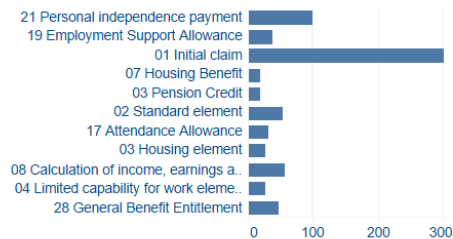
Issues	
Benefits & tax credits	353
Benefits Universal Credit	501
Consumer goods & services	67
Debt	129
Education	7
Employment	104
Financial services & capability	25
GVA & Hate Crime	6
Health & community care	47
Housing	122
Immigration & asylum	18
Legal	54
Other	45
Relationships & family	83
Tax	17
Travel & transport	17
Utilities & communications	43
Grand Total	1,638



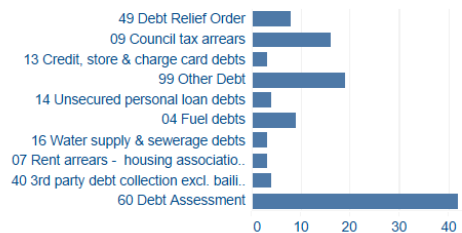
Channel including follow up work



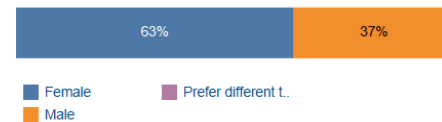
Top benefit issues



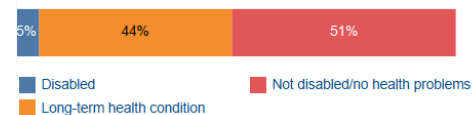
Top debt issues



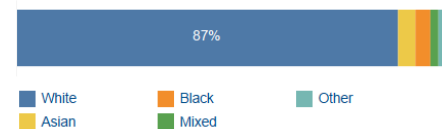
Gender



Disability / Long-term health



Ethnicity





Citizens Advice Cheshire North provides 10 sessions in Macclesfield every week from our offices on Sunderland Street and a half day session at Just Drop-In every Thursday afternoon – Pre-Covid

Clients



955 Clients
73 Clients per week

Issues



1,638
Issues dealt with

The types of problems that people are bringing to us are settling into the types of issues we were dealing with prior to Covid. In the last quarter we have dealt with a high number of welfare rights, both out of work and disability benefits, as well employment, relationships and a notable increase in health queries, as people's frustration with home care options were apparent.

We have also seen a post Christmas increase in the number of people asking for our help with debt issues, with the details of these debts indicating that living costs are outstripping people's income.

There has also been an increase in the number of people approaching CACN for assistance with relationship issues, regrettably this includes a number of domestic violence issues, which is also a predictable consequence of the forced proximity that Christmas holidays bring.

Outcomes

"I didn't know where to go, I have been trapped living like this for too long, you helped me see there was a way out" **Client who was living with domestic violence who we helped link in with Cheshire Without Abuse**

"I thought I was going to be on the streets, my sister made me come here and with two phone calls you've changed everything, I wish I'd come years ago" **Elderly man who had rent arrears and threatened with losing his flat**

Macclesfield

The service out of our Macclesfield office has been very busy with more people asking for our help across all areas of enquiry.

Post Covid, we have been able to offer more face to face advice by bringing more of our volunteers back into the office to provide the help that clients need.

To do this we have introduced different ways of working along with some alterations physical changes to our building, to allow better air circulation.

We are now seeing more clients face to face, while at the same time maintaining support through other channels such as telephone, webchat and email.

Although many clients and their issues demand that they are seen in person, there are still a significant number of people who for Covid related or other reasons, would choose to be dealt with remotely and we have to be able to manage our resources to accommodate this.

CACN are confident, as we recruit and train new advisers to respond to the demands on our service, that we are equipped to respond to local demand with a locally focussed service.

Enquiry areas in Macclesfield:

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Benefits	782	597	790	854
Consumer	49	57	60	67
Debts	235	230	95	129
Employment	99	76	93	104
Housing	114	129	121	122
Legal	55	66	52	54
Relationships	87	72	70	89
Tax	9	12	5	17
Health	25	21	27	47
Education	4	6	8	7
Immigration	27	15	20	18
Utilities	13	12	35	43
Financial	12	19	19	25
Travel	15	23	21	17
Discrimination	3	0	0	0
Other	18	36	29	45
Total:	1,547	1,371	1,445	1,638

Case Studies

Case Study 1

The client was vulnerable client (78) living alone, has multiple physical and mental health challenges and came to Citizens Advice worried about paying bills due to deductions from Pension Credit. The client was not sure what the deductions were for and had been promised a letter from the DWP detailing what they were for, but this had never arrived. Client came for help chasing the letter up.

The adviser supported the client to telephone the DWP who said that they were looking into the deductions which were for overpayment of Universal Credit and that they would provide a letter explaining the basis of the deductions and that they would refund any deductions taken in error. Explained the hardship this was causing and obtained assurance that they would deal with the case as a matter of urgency.

We discussed with the client their broader circumstances which revealed that the client was not sure whether she was getting Housing Benefit. A call to the local Council showed that the client was not receiving the Housing Benefit that she was entitled to and therefore we made a telephone claim with the client. We also requested back payment which the Council Officer said he would request be backdated 1 year.

Client was not confident with using the internet so was assisted to upload tenancy agreement and increase in rent for 2022/23 letter in support of her claim.

The client was reassured that she will receive a reply from the DWP about the Pension Credit deductions shortly but was invited back if this was not forthcoming

Client's Housing Benefit claim will cover her rent of £5K a year and the back-payment of up to £5K will relieve the financial hardship the client has been experiencing.

Case Study 2

Client contacted Citizens Advice, seeking assistance. There were significant additional challenges as we were unable to offer face to face appointments, and the client explained that they have learning difficulties. Client does not manage their own financial affairs, and the Courts have granted Cheshire East Council Money Management Team authority to manage client's financial affairs on the client's behalf.

Client was alarmed that a significant amount of money had been taken from their bank account. Client was very upset, as client had repeatedly tried to speak with client's allocated Social Worker, but with no success. The client wanted to understand why this money had been taken.

With the client's consent, Citizens Advice spoke with client's Housing Support Worker and client's Social Worker. Citizens Advice needed to understand the reasoning and rules that had been applied in authorising such a large withdrawal.

Citizens Advice had endeavoured to secure the necessary information directly, but had limited success with this initially.

With no wish to pursue a formal complaints route with Cheshire East Council, and with perseverance, a Disability Advocate service was found, and a named Disability Advocate was allocated to the client. Citizens Advice provided the technical knowledge of rules and regulations, and the questions for the Advocate to seek information from the appropriate Cheshire East Council departments.

With a team effort, the rules were explored. The outcome being that a sum of money was returned to the client's back account.

Case Study 3

CI is older in years and their married partner has passed away in the last few months. Client is very distressed about their loss. Client would like assistance to make a formal complaint against the hospital.

Citizens Advice was able to provide contact details for the formal hospital complaints process. We were able to offer the client a listening ear, looking to understand the nature of the complaint. We explored with the client possible areas of concern that the client may wish to seek clarity on. Citizens Advice endeavoured to discuss with the client the COVID-19 restrictions within hospitals that are being applied nationally for everyone.

The client is very distressed that client was unable to remain with client's partner, as partner was being admitted into hospital. Client believes that because client was not at partner's side, speaking up for partner's care needs, that partner did not receive the care that was required for partner's underlying health challenges.

Citizens Advice were able to help with drafting a letter for sending, and then further assistance offered to client in following up the complaint with the hospital

Will McKellar
Chief Officer
May 2022