



Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres

Annual Report 2016



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Front cover: Colin Hampton, Cllr Steve Marshall-Clarke and Christina Crookes giving out chocolate money to launch the Alfreton Max your Money Campaign.

Who are we?

Established in 1983, Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres is part of a larger network of TUC Unemployed Workers' Centres. We aim to prevent or relieve poverty amongst the unemployed, underemployed, unwaged and those in receipt of or entitled to benefits and credits, as well as other disadvantaged people in Derbyshire.

The organisation has now become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with 16 trustees drawn from the considerable wealth of support and expertise around the centres.

The founders of the organisation would be pleased that the organisation has maintained its aims and objectives, continuing the links with the communities it supports.

All the staff at the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres started off as volunteers. Commitment runs through the trustees, staff and volunteers. DUWC has been built by some legendary members of our local



communities and everyone realises that they have a duty to continue the vital work started back in the early 1980's.

What we Provide

The Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres have gained a fine reputation for the services we provide. Our work is recognised locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. We provide advice, support and representation for all who come to us for help. However, we don't just wait for people to come to us, we proactively make our services known to the hardest to reach and most vulnerable within our communities.

Each year we deal with over 9000 enquiries at our centres and outreach venues. We have recovered over £3 million in lump sum payments and increased weekly benefits for the people of Derbyshire. This money is vital both for the recipients but also for the regeneration of the local economy. Money gained is mostly spent locally helping to preserve jobs and aid local businesses.

Our services are provided by a few paid staff and a team of volunteers across Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire, Bolsover and Amber Valley. We have been successful in

training volunteers from our communities, many of who move on into employment.

Volunteers

In 2016 we have welcomed a number of new volunteers. John Power, who began volunteering during the previous year, established himself in the Advice Team along long-standing volunteers, Shirley Pierson, Karen Seymour, Brigit Long and Dick Banker.

New volunteers William Nightingale, Tatiana Shrimpton, Marta Jaskot, Anita Bryla and John Jarvis have brought a new enthusiasm to our advice sessions. We look forward to their progression in the organisation.

Our organisation is also supported by volunteers carrying out reception duties. Keith O'Neill and Allison Jarvis continue to provide invaluable help. David Eccles has guided us through the change of organisational structure and policy reviews as well as helping with funding bids.

DUWC is lucky to have a wide range of volunteers, from advising to leafletting – everyone is valued.

Thank you.

The Chairman writes

Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres, the organisation, has never had it easy. Organising, advising and supporting those out of work, in precarious work, or on benefits is no simple task. Giving people a voice in amongst the rich and powerful requires ingenuity and perseverance.

Our staff and volunteers have shown they are very much up to the task. There are over 450 Appeal tribunals waiting to be heard by DUWC. Queues of people are attending our sixteen venues where our advisors are accessible for advice. During this last year our staff and volunteers have carried out 59 home visits. Thousands of people have benefitted from seeking advice and representation. However, the organisation does not wait for people to come to us – with the help of extra funds from Public Health and Coalfields Regeneration Trust we have carried out take-up campaigns throughout the former coalfields area. Many people have been convinced by our campaigns to have their benefits and tax credit

entitlements checked. As a result, incomes have been maximised, changing lives, giving greater security and expanding choices. This extra support has allowed us to reach out to some of our hardest hit communities, focusing help on the hardest to reach.

As well as advice, DUWC has been successful in promoting the Welfare Charter throughout the Trade Union Movement, community organisations and political parties. Collaboration on research around the issue of Benefit Sanctions has been high on the agenda, with case studies indicating the urgent need for changes in policy bringing dignity back to the welfare system. Please spend some time, perusing this Annual Report and get a flavour of the tremendous work done by all associated with the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres.

Graham Baxter



*Councillor Graham Baxter
MBE, Chairman of DUWC's
Management Committee*



The Co-ordinator writes

As this Annual Report is being produced the film I, Daniel Blake, directed by Ken Loach is hitting the screens in cinemas across the country. The winner of the prestigious Palme D'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, I, Daniel Blake is the portrayal of a man faced with the horrors of having to confront the benefit system on becoming ill and having to give up his occupation. The film also highlights the sanctions process, foodbanks, and how the whole system grinds people down rather than helping people up.

The film's portrayal is so close to the realities faced by many people who have come to the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres for help. It will be difficult viewing for those whose loved ones have been failed by a process that was supposed to be supporting them. It lays bare the cruelty heaped upon the most vulnerable in our society.

Ill health can affect anyone – so this film is not just about 'other' people. We are all only one visit away from the doctors in finding out we might need the welfare system as a recipient or carer. We need that security. That is why the work of the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres is so important in not only helping advising and representing but in giving a voice to the many 'Daniel Blakes' out there wanting to fight back. We help maintain the spirit and self respect of those battling for their entitlements, often in the most difficult circumstances.

This Annual Report is a testimony to the work of all in our organisations. Please continue to give your support.

Colin Hampton



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

Your Voice Your Rights!



Our unemployed hero walks the tightrope of benefit sanctions outside Shirebrook Jobcentre.

Walking the tightrope of benefit sanctions

At the turn of the year Financial Action and Advice launched a report 'The Impact of Benefit Sanctions Policy in Derbyshire'. Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres staff and volunteers played a crucial role in gathering of evidence for this report. The report concentrated on why people are being sanctioned and the impact this has on the people and families who experience a sanction.



Your Voice Your Rights!

What is a Sanction?

In most cases a sanction means going without the only or main source of income for a minimum of four weeks. People currently have their benefit payments withheld when the jobcentre adviser thinks that there may be a case for a sanction. Benefit is stopped before any decision is made and before the claimant has the right to challenge the decision.

Although the number of sanctions has fallen from its peak, which in some Local Authority areas affected over 20% of claimants, the numbers caught up in benefit sanctions is not insignificant. In Derbyshire, by March 2015 7% of claimants were affected. The number of sanctions applied is driven not by claimant behaviour but by the guidance and decision makers. The numbers sanctioned differs widely from jobcentre to jobcentre. Very few people challenge this sanction decision. The Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) process has made it more

complicated for people to challenge decisions about their benefits with many reporting that they were unaware that in receiving a negative decision regarding their MR that they could go on to lodge an appeal.



Benefit sanctions make juggling the problems of rent, fuel and food bills so much more difficult if not impossible.

Your Voice Your Rights!

What is the Impact of Sanctions?

- Sanctions have a negative impact on physical and mental health, finances, self-esteem and relationships. In a significant proportion the impact lasts in the long term.
- Awareness of sanctions has little impact on claimant behaviour.
- Being sanctioned often prevents people from being able to look for work.
- Sanctions dramatically increase the pressure on support agencies.
- Receiving a sanction pushes people into a situation of multiple and complex difficulty and crisis, leaving support workers 'fire fighting' instead of helping people to make progress.

Conclusion

- Claimants are being referred for sanction decisions, often without sufficient reason.

- Sanctions remove the main or only source of income from people without other resources, forcing them into debt and to go without essentials.
- Sanctions have a negative impact on the health, finances, relationships, and overall wellbeing of people sanctioned and their dependents.
- Sanctions stretch already scarce resources across support services in the statutory and voluntary sector, increasing pressure on those organisations, their staff and their budgets.

Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres has, from the outset, been opposed to the sanctions regime. The Financial Action and Advice Research findings confirm our view that sanctions do not bring people closer to the labour market but are detrimental to health, including mental health, increase the risk of homelessness, going without food and fuel and escalating debt problems. Sanctions indeed make the claiming of benefits like walking a tightrope!

Your Voice Your Rights!

Universal Basic Income

What is it - and why should we be lobbying for it?

A basic income is an income unconditionally granted to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement. It is a form of minimum income guarantee that differs from those that now exist in various European countries in three important ways:

- It is paid to individuals rather than households.
- It is paid irrespective of any income from other sources.
- It is paid without requiring the performance of any work or the willingness to accept a job if offered. It has been seen as the panacea of many of today's problems - problems highlighted by the Ken Loach film *I, Daniel Blake*.

But it is the inability to tackle unemployment with conventional means that has led in the last decade or so to the idea being taken seriously throughout Europe by a growing number of scholars and organizations.



Social policy and economic policy can no longer be conceived separately, and basic income is increasingly viewed as the only viable way of reconciling two of their respective central objectives: poverty relief and full employment.

There are a wide variety of proposals around. They differ according to the amounts involved, the source of funding, the nature and size of the reductions in other transfers, and along many other dimensions.

Many prominent European social scientists have now come out in favour of basic income – among them two Nobel laureates in economics. Some major politicians are also beginning to stick their necks out in support of it. DUWC not only points out the inadequacies of the present arrangements for those claiming benefits and tax credits but also looks at the possible solutions to the problems of unemployment and poverty. ***Our aim is to put ourselves out of work!***

'A basic Income is an income unconditionally granted to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement'

Your Voice Your Rights!

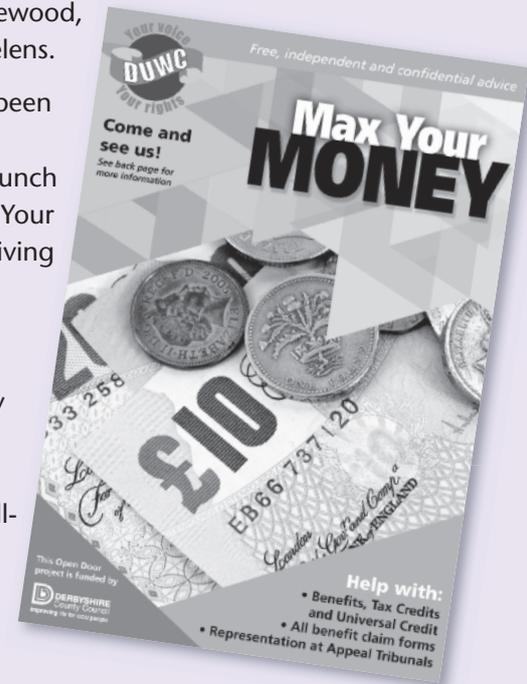
Max your money

Our long running 'Max Your Money' Benefits and Tax Credits take-up campaigns continue to have an impact across Derbyshire. We have continued to attract support from Derbyshire County Council Public Health to provide this additional impetus to our advice services. These campaigns allow us to reach out to people who may otherwise be unaware of their entitlement to benefits and tax credits.



Following on from our successful campaigns last year we now plan to take our Max Your Money Roadshow to Ironville, Riddings, Somercotes, Alfreton, Langley Mill and Heanor. Before Christmas we will move into Boythorpe, Birdholme, Grangewood, Hasland and St Helens.

The publicity has been improved and revamped. The launch of our latest 'Max Your Money' saw the giving away of chocolate money in Alfreton Town Centre by Derbyshire County Councillor and DUWC Trustee, Cllr. Steve Marshall-Clarke.



Your Voice Your Rights!

Partnership and Collaborative Work

DUWC is part of the Advice Nottingham consortium that has been awarded funding from the Big Lottery and European Social Fund to deliver an innovative project working with financially excluded people across the D2N2 area.

‘Money Sorted’ offers a programme of person centred support and a range of bespoke interventions designed to enable people experiencing financial crisis and financial hardship to take control, build confidence, and improve their money management skills, to tackle their problems and move out of poverty and exclusion. The project will fund front line workers to deliver this work.

DUWC will be hosting one of the three year posts to work across North Derbyshire.

DUWC is also working alongside a number of organisations providing a service to people whose first language is not English in order to tackle the underlying causes of their crisis.

The support we receive through Local Authorities, Town and Parish Councils allows us to bring in much needed funding to our areas. Without their core support none of this would be possible!

Derbyshire Bilingual Crisis Buddy Service

This service will work with people whose first language is not English to tackle the underlying causes of their crisis.

Non-English speaking individuals in crisis will have 1-2-1 bi-lingual Buddy who will support them to:

- Access information about local services,
- Attend local services with them and
- Accessing advice to guide clients through their period of crisis.



Outcomes:

Positive steps towards a better life
Confidence to access services
Integration into their community

To find out more or to make a referral, please contact: Jon Wynn at LINCUS on 01246 274844 or email: jon.wynn@lincus.org.uk



Our Funders 2016

Local Authorities

- Chesterfield Borough Council
- North East Derbyshire District Council
- Bolsover District Council
- Derbyshire County Council

Parish and Town Councils

- Alfreton Town Council
- Ault Hucknall Parish Council
- Brimington Parish Council

- Clay Cross Parish Council
- Clowne Parish Council
- Eckington Parish Council
- Grassmoor Parish Council
- North Wingfield Parish Council
- Pinxton Parish Council
- Shirebrook Town Council
- Somercotes Town Council
- Staveley Town Council
- Unstone Parish Council
- Warsop Parish Council

Grants and Donations

- Working Neighbourhood Fund
- Health and Wellbeing (DCC)
- Big Local

Small Grants and Donations

- Anonymous Charitable Trusts
- Graysons Solicitors



CHESTERFIELD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

North East
Derbyshire
District Council



Bolsover
District Council



DERBYSHIRE
County Council
Improving life for local people

Statistics

Type of Appeal Oct 1st - Sept 30th 2016	Abandoned	Pending	Completed	Arrears Amount	Weekly Amount
Attendance Allowance	0	3	1	£500.00	£82.40
Council Tax Reduction	0	2	0	£0.00	£0.00
Derbyshire Discretionary Fund	0	1	0	£0.00	£0.00
Disability Living Allowance	2	11	8	£18,876.89	£742.65
Housing Benefit	2	13	0	£0.00	£0.00
Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit	2	13	3	£0.00	£0.00
Job Seekers Allowance	3	25	2	£950.00	£73.10
Other	0	1	0	£0.00	£0.00
Pension Credit	3	2	2	£6,410.00	£0.00
Personal Independence Payment	20	152	129	£203,326.24	£10,564.40
Reduced Earnings Allowance	0	1	0	£0.00	£0.00
Social Fund	2	3	1	£2,500.00	£0.00
Tax Credits	0	23	7	£19,845.20	£342.00
Universal Credit	1	1	01	£0.00	£0.00
Employment and Support Allowance	17	200	91	£102,627.30	£4,019.65
Income Support	0	3	2	£0.00	£0.00
TOTAL	52	454	246	£355,035.63	£15,824.20

As a result of these tribunals the following amounts were awarded:

Lump Sum Arrears: £355,036 **Ongoing Weekly Benefits p.a.: £822.858**

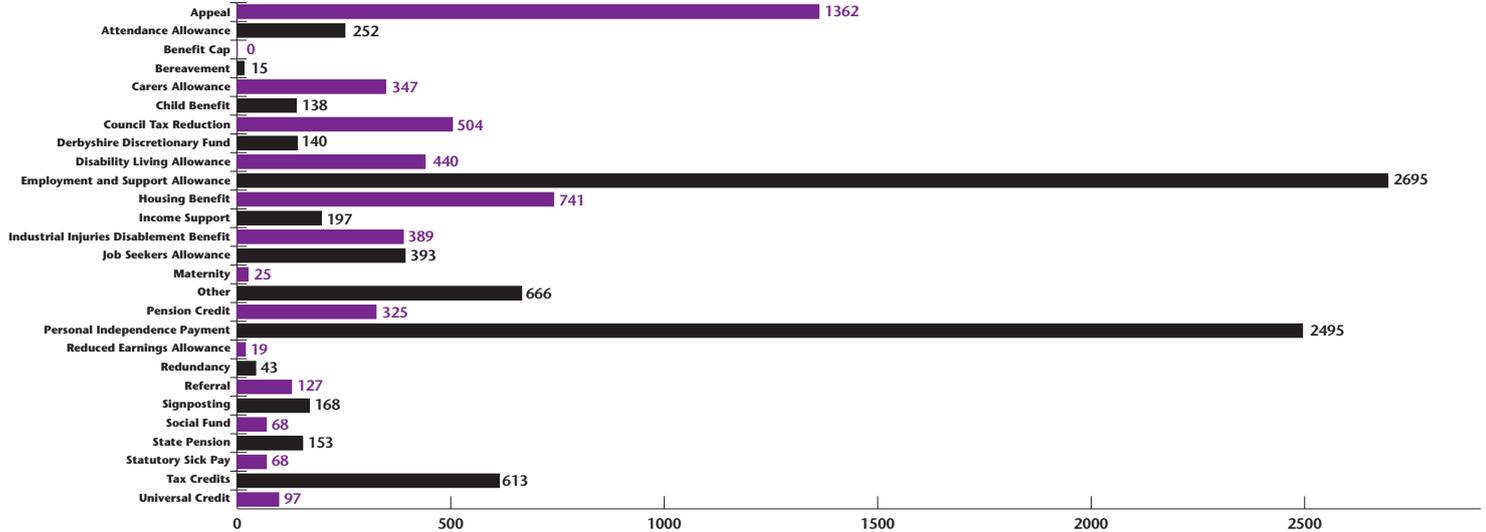
Over a year general enquiries at the Centres and Outreach Offices (as well as by home visits) resulted in payments amounting to £2,385.293 for Derbyshire residents.

During the last year this has meant a total of **£3,563,187** has been won through our advice and representation and at appeals.



Statistics

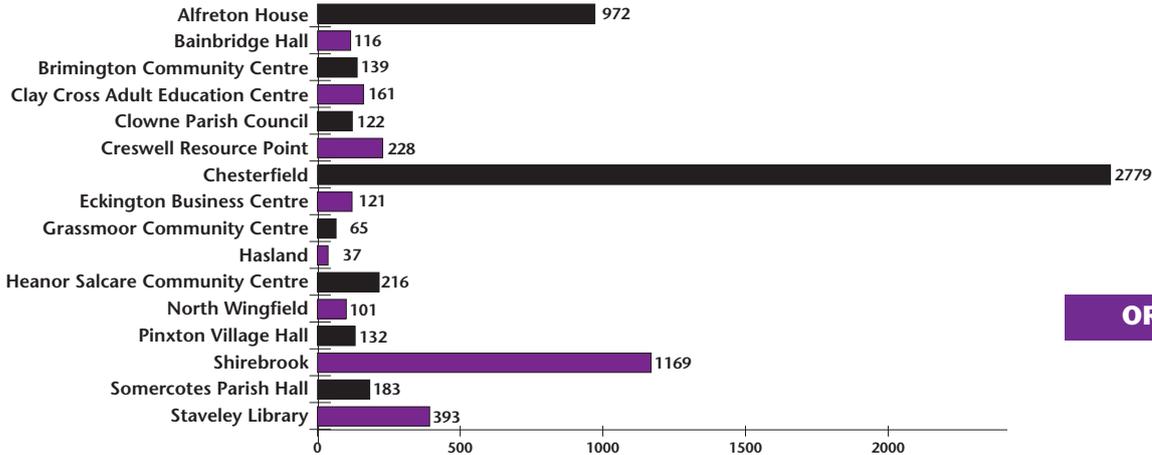
ENQUIRY TOTALS 2015/2016



Statistics

VENUE CALLER TOTALS 2015/2016

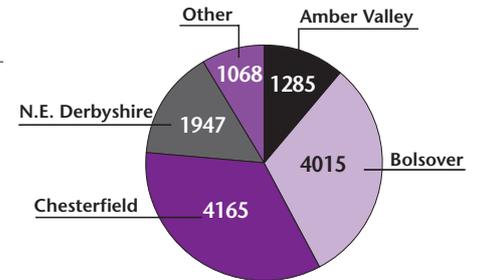
Number of calls: 6934



- 59 Home Visits
- 711 Telephone enquiries
- 6059 In Person
- 164 Email



ORIGIN OF ENQUIRIES



Around the area - Chesterfield



The Centre continues to receive superb support from Brimington Parish Council. At all our venues we have dealt with 459 enquiries from Brimington residents during the year as well as representing 7 people at tribunal. DUWC volunteers have leafletted the whole area and will continue to advertise our weekly service at the Community Centre.

Our Staveley advice sessions at the Library receive much needed support from the Working Neighbourhood Fund and the Staveley Town Council. 20 people received help and representation at their Appeal Tribunal and 989 enquiries at all venues.

The Hasland outreach has begun operations at the start of

Thank you ever so much for your help and expertise. I am eternally grateful.

B.S Staveley

the year, thanks to the Grassland Hasmoor Big Local and has had a steady uptake of enquiries with many responding to the advertising and literature encouraging take-up. 151 enquiries have been received at all venues.

Our headquarters on Rose Hill East at the lower ground floor of the Town Hall have been inundated with enquiries from throughout North Derbyshire. There have been 2779 recorded contacts at this venue during the year.

In the New Year the DUWC will have to move out of our present suite of offices and interview rooms whilst the Borough Council undertakes necessary asbestos removal work. At the time of writing we are unsure of where we will have to relocate. However you can be sure that we will be there for you, your family and your community throughout this upheaval.

The workload is rising and the staff and volunteers are under pressure. We ask for your patience as, undoubtedly, waiting times will increase as the number of tribunals increases and the support required increases.

Around the area - Chesterfield

Case study

We had a referral from the Chesterfield CAB for an Employment and Support Allowance Appeal for a Chesterfield claimant. The claimant had been awarded 0 points at her Work Capability Assessment. She had significant problems with mobility, particularly standing, sitting and reaching.

Her original assessment had stated that she could walk for over 200 metres. However it had taken her 24 minutes to walk that distance. The fact that a person without any disabilities would take three minutes to walk this distance.

Our appeal on her behalf at Tribunal was successful and the claimant was placed in the Support Group. She was awarded 30 points in total, a very significant improvement on the 0 points had been awarded at the

assessment. This was a significant turnaround. Arrears of £838.00 were paid and ongoing weekly addition of £115.00

Case study

A Brimington woman came to see us as a result of the take-up campaign with regard to her benefit award. She had the relevant paperwork with her and it detailed her entitlement. However, as a single person with a Disability Living Allowance claim of Middle Rate Care, she should also have been receiving an additional Severe Disability Payment. Therefore our adviser called the DWP and had the relevant form sent out which was later completed. The result was that her income was increased by £61.85 weekly, backdated for three months.



Around the area - Chesterfield

Case study

We received a referral from the CAB for a Personal Independence Payment appeal. The claimant, from Chesterfield had received 6 points for daily living activities, which is not enough points to receive an award of Personal Independence Payment. No points had been awarded for mobility.

The claimant had been under investigation by numerous consultants, both at the Chesterfield Royal Hospital and the Royal Hallamshire Hospital. The investigations had revealed multiple diagnoses and were still ongoing. The claimant had been falling and was covered in bruises: photographic and medical evidence of the bruises had been provided. The claimant also had been provided with two crutches a wheelchair and a leg brace and was unable to walk more than 10 metres.

The claimant was awarded Enhanced Daily Living and

Enhanced Mobility and was found to have severely limited ability to carry out mobility activities. It was deemed inappropriate to fix a term.

This meant that the claimant could access a car via Motability and was awarded premiums on her means tested benefits. Her nephew was also able to claim Carers Allowance for her.

Case study

A man from Brockwell came to our Holmebrook take up session. It was two days before he was due to attend a Social Security appeal tribunal, his Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) had been disallowed following a work capability assessment. He was struggling to find representation at his appeal hearing; a friend who had used our service in the past suggested that the man request our help.

Around the area - Chesterfield

Although it was short notice, we were able to help the man whose confidence was at such low ebb; he did not believe he would win his case. At first sight of the appeal papers we were concerned, the man had quite clearly under represented his medical problems; it would take a real effort on our part to turn things around in his favour.

Whilst interviewing the man only hours before his tribunal hearing we discovered a letter sent by a hospital specialist to the man's GP, indicating that he was having unexplained falls, which would need further investigation. Within the appeal papers it was recorded that the man had fallen on one occasion resulting in a slight injury. We did discover that the man had had several near misses, where he had been able to prevent falling to the floor; the falls were happening without warning.

At the appeal hearing we asked the Tribunal panel to

consider ESA regulation 29. This piece of legislation considers the risk to a claimant's health if they are classed as fit for work. In the case of the Holmebrook man his health was at risk to himself and others because of his unpredictable falls.

The Tribunal Panel agreed with our representations and allowed the man's appeal; they decided that he had limited capability for work because of the unpredictable falls – the man was found unfit for work under ESA regulation 29. DUWC are experienced when it comes to taking on appeals at short notice and providing quality representation.

Thank you very much for helping me when I needed it. You got me through so much, I can't thank you enough.

J.P Chesterfield



Around the area - Bolsover



Two thousand and sixteen, a year of anticipation as Universal Credit (UC) came to a Jobcentre near you. DUWC's have been aware that the numbers of UC claimants in our area would initially be small because of the limiting nature of the UC 'gateway', a system of filtering out complex claims in favour of mainly single job seekers. However, despite there being only a small number of UC claimants accessing our advice service, it is clear that the difficulties we had flagged up, such as on-line claiming, monthly payments in arrears and sanctions, appear to be the main problem areas within Universal Credit. We continue to monitor the situation as

Don't know what I would have done without the help of Andy with my Appeal. Thank you

Nathan Clowne

we move ever closer to the UC 'full service' roll out. This will mean no new claims for most means tested benefits for claimants in a UC full service area.

Welfare cuts and changes continue to burden claimants around our area. As an organisation we continue to challenge both the DWP and HMRC over benefits and credits

issues. The numbers of complaints we have made to both the DWP and HMRC have increased by at least 50%. Our main concerns have been around poor administration and benefit delays, the involvement of Concentrix - a private contractor working with HMRC and dealing with compliance issues within tax credits claims. Many Tax



Andy Parkes, adviser

Around the area - Bolsover

Credit claimants across the Bolsover District have had their tax credits claims stopped without an explanation, under the guise of compliance checking. We have been proactive in challenging what we believe are dubious tax credits compliance decisions, through appeals, complaints and the MP's Office.

Throughout 2016, our outreach venues have continued to be well attended, with a wide range of benefit related enquiries dealt with by our dedicated staff and volunteers. In the near future we will be re-locating both our Clowne and Bolsover venues; we will be advertising the location and times of our new venues, as and when we they are confirmed.

We are again grateful for the commitment of our volunteers, Allison Jarvis, Shirley Pierson, Karen Seymour and Keith O'Neill; their dedication is the reason we are able to continue to provide a quality 4 days a week advice service from our Shirebrook office. We are also grateful for the continued support of Parish Councils throughout the Bolsover District allowing us to provide outreach in Carr Vale, Pinxton, Clowne and Creswell.

As we reach the end of 2016 and look forward to 2017. We are gearing up to deal with further changes to the benefits system. So here is a flavour of things to come - Full roll-out of the Universal Credit 'full service', a new Bereavement Support Payment to replace current Bereavement Benefits, support for children in Tax Credits and Universal Credit limited to two children and the those in receipt of ESA and in the Work Related Activity Group will receive the same amount as those on Jobseekers Allowance. DUWC's staff and volunteers will have to work hard to advise and represent those affected by changes, which in some cases will bring further hardship to individuals and families in our communities.

*Thank you to Karen for everything
you have done for me.*

Val, Bolsover



Around the area - Bolsover

Case Study

A single parent from Shirebrook came in to our Office on Patchwork Row after finding out her tax credits claim had been closed and with a notification that she had been overpaid tax credits for a whole tax year.

We began trying to find out the reason for the closure of her tax credits claim. We discovered that Concentrix, a private contractor working for HMRC, had undertaken a claim compliance, finding evidence that led them to assume that someone was living with her. This meant her single claim should have actually been a joint one. The woman explained that she had not lived with her ex-husband for well over two years – Concentrix were demanding evidence of her single status including bank statements, council tax and utility bills. We were unable to contact Concentrix despite numerous phone calls. We

helped the woman firstly to request a reconsideration and then appeal directly to the courts– she provided enough information that in our view should have overturned the decision to stop her tax credits.

A tribunal judge agreed with us and found in the woman's favour. It was confirmed that she was a single claimant, the evidence provided by HMRC and Concentrix did not relate to her current situation. The tribunal Judge commented that the case should never have been brought to a tribunal court for consideration. The tax credits case took 6 months to reach the tribunal stage – a waste of public money. Concentrix a company working for HMRC to save public money were actually helping to waste it. HMRC Tax Credits Office had the opportunity to stop the appeal process over a 6 month period –to save money and avoid the misery and hardship suffered by a single parent with young children to look after.

Around the area - Bolsover

Case Study

We have recently helped a woman from Creswell who failed her ESA medical and appealed the decision to remove her benefit.

The woman in question sought our advice at our Creswell venue. She had been on Incapacity Benefit for a number of years before being migrated to Employment and Support Allowance; she had been on ESA for at least two years and following her second medical in two years was found fit for work. We helped her successfully challenge the decision to stop her benefit. Instead of it being a straight forward case of arrears being paid back to her, the woman was a victim of poor administration and gross incompetence.

The woman had not received any arrears after 8 weeks of her tribunal win. We contacted the Department of Work and Pensions, who firstly informed that the

woman had never been an ESA claimant and was entitled to Income Support. Despite our protestations and complaints (we sent the DWP ESA decision letters received by the woman and the Tribunal's decision) nothing happened – with the woman left in hardship. It took some effort on our part, which included taking the woman's case through the DWP's complaints process to get a resolution and an apology – all money owed to the woman was paid in full.

Just a quick note to say how much we appreciate the help and reassurance you have given us with our tax credit issues.

Mr and Mrs J, Shirebrook



Around the area - North East Derbyshire



During the year we have represented at 47 Appeal Tribunals for people in North East Derbyshire District. We have 91 tribunals waiting to be heard in the area. Our Clay Cross, Grassmoor, North Wingfield and Eckington outreach venues are all well used.

Don't know what I would have done without the help of Andy with my Appeal.

Thank you

Mrs M Grassmoor

Our thanks go to Glynn for leafletting the whole of the Eckington, Marsh Lane and Renishaw conurbations. Our thanks also go to Dronfield resident and volunteer Paul Kent who has maintained and improved our Case Management System (CMS). His IT expertise has transformed our work and made reporting to funders so much easier whilst giving us a far more rigorous and accurate means of recording our work. Paul is now working on a new improved version. As well as devising the CMS, Paul has trained all staff and volunteers in its use.

Again we have received great support from some of the Parish Councils in the area, supplementing the funding from the District Council. The Centres Advisers have represented at Tribunals where the cases have been referred by both Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire CABs as part of a funding package from DCC Public Health. Many of the Chesterfield referrals arise out of advice given in health related settings.

Around the area - North East Derbyshire

Case Study

Two Claimants came from Killamarsh to see us for advice and their only income was £108 per week which was wages earned by one of the claimants.

The other partner had put in a claim for ESA this was refused but the decision had not been challenged.

We helped him put in a new claim for ESA on the basis that he had a worsening condition.

We advised him to claim PIP. We helped him put in a claim for PIP and he was awarded Standard Daily Living and Enhanced Mobility. This gave him £112.55 per week.

His partner could now claim Carers Allowance which gave her £62.10 per week. The couple could also claim Income Support as a top up. The Income support was £45.30 per week. Total maximisation of income was £219.95 per week.

Case Study

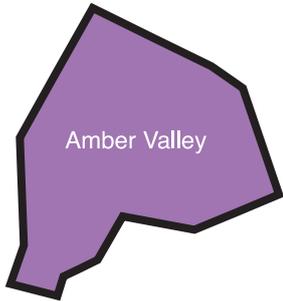
A claimant came into our Outreach at Eckington, on the advice of a taxi driver! He and his wife was living on state pension of £171.00 per week and his wife was in receipt of high rate Attendance Allowance. He was not in receipt of pension credit or any Council Tax Reduction.

Our staff member advised him that he could claim pension credit and also he would have underlying entitlement to carers allowance. He could also claim Council Tax Reduction.

A home visit was conducted and pension credit was awarded of £101.15 per week. This was also backdated for 13 weeks paying arrears of £1314.95. Council tax reduction was also awarded of £33.00 per week. Total income maximisation of £134.15 per week.



Around the area - Amber Valley



Despite receiving no grant aid support from Amber Valley Borough Council, Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres provides a service in the area. We concentrate on those conurbations where the Town or Parish Council gives funding. We are grateful for

the longstanding support of Alfreton Town Council, Somercotes Parish Council plus Heanor and Loscoe Town Council.

In Alfreton the Town Council has spruced up our accommodation in suite 4 of Alfreton House with a lick of paint. The two and a half day per week service is very well used and draws people in from surrounding areas stretching from Stonebroom, Tibshelf, Blackwell and South Normanton through to Ironville and Riddings. Somercotes Parish Council continues its support and the sessions are always busy. Heanor Salcare provides our accommodation in the town and signposts people to our services.

Throughout Amber Valley we have received 1285 enquiries and dealt with 42 Appeals during the last year. Our volunteer Dick Banker, who was a DWP Presenting Officer at Appeals Tribunals, has now swapped sides since retiring from the Department, and has taken on the responsibility of covering tribunals in Nottingham and Derby when possible. Like all our volunteers we respect their fantastic commitment to the organisation and the people who use our services.



Launch of Amber Valley Max Your Money Campaign funded by Derbyshire County Council

Around the area - Amber Valley

Case Study

Mrs. B from Alfreton was in receipt of Pension Credit. She had mobility problems and lived alone in a three bedroom house. The difficulties she was having made her conclude that she needed to move into a bungalow and downsize to a smaller property.

She informed the Pension Service of her intentions and was told that the sale of the house would be classed as savings and go into her calculation for Pension Credit and would result in loss of benefit.

We rang Pension Credit on her behalf and informed them that in our opinion certain types of capital that are received for specific purposes are ignored for up to a year or until an assessed income period ends if that is longer. The money from the sale of this property was earmarked to buy a new home so in this instance it should be disregarded. They apologised for their error.

Case Study

Mr. R. from Heanor scored 0 points on his Work Capability Assessment. We requested a Mandatory Reconsideration to have the decision looked at again. He said he was unable to sign on for Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) due to his mental health condition.

Under the new appeal system the claimant would receive no benefit payments until the Decision Maker had reconsidered the decision again. Unfortunately this took 6 weeks. We had to help reinstate his Housing Benefit and Council Tax because this had been suspended as he was not on a relevant benefit even though he had a nil income. The fact that he could not sign on for JSA meant the only money he would be able to get was via the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund and hand-outs from the Food Bank. When his appeal was finally registered with the Tribunal Service we were able to get him re-instated onto Employment and Support Allowance. He was paid his arrears and following his appeal he was placed into the Work Related Activity Group.



User Feedback Survey 2016

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

0 – 5 minutes	86
5 – 15 minutes	31
15 – 30 minutes	31
30 – 60 minutes	21
Over – 1 hour	2

Each individual was asked if they would use our service again. 170 said that they would. **100% positive**

Each individual was asked if they would recommend us to someone else who was in need of benefits advice.

170 said they would. **100% positive.**

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

Told by family or friends	76
Previous use of advice services	27
Local publicity	9
Social Worker	5
Jobcentre Plus	10

Leaflet	14
Display sign	17
Member of Parliaments Office	1
Employer	1
British Legion	2
CAB	5
Training Provider	1

There were 2 individuals who did not make any comment.

Each person was asked how they felt about their visit to DUWC.

Very Happy – excellent service	157
Satisfied – staff have done their best	12
Dissatisfied – could do better	0
Very Unhappy – the service was poor	1
None of the above	0

There were only 2 people who did not make any comment.

User Feedback Survey 2016

Here are a selection of comments given:

'I would like to thank all the staff for their professional advice and help'

'Helped with two appeals, won both'

'Good advice, exactly what I wanted'

'Easy to talk to and approach, not judgemental'

'Very important to have this organisation would be totally struggling without it'

'Nothing is too much trouble'

'Even though they were very busy they managed to see me'

'Fantastic service, invaluable help'

'Nothing is too much trouble'

'Could not have done this myself'

'Thank you for helping me with my ESA appeal, I would not be able to do this without you'

'Need more like this service'

'You are the fourth emergency service'

'Excellent and vital service'

'Warm welcome and great service'

'Would recommend to anyone, very helpful'

'Staff treated my mother very well as she was very distressed when she arrived'



WHERE TO GET ADVICE

Chesterfield & North East Derbyshire

1 Rose Hill East, Chesterfield S40 1NU
Tel 01246 231441/Fax 01246 551529
Email: info@duwc.org.uk
Monday - Friday 9.30am - 1.00pm

BRIMINGTON - Community Centre, High Street
Monday 9.00am - 12 noon

CLAY CROSS - Adult Education Centre, Market Street
Monday 9.30am - 12.30pm

ECKINGTON - Business Centre, Market Street
Monday 1.30pm - 3.30pm
From January 2017, Wednesday 1.30pm - 3.30pm

NORTH WINGFIELD - Community Resources Centre,
Whiteleas Avenue. Thursday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

HASLAND - Unit 2 Penmore Business Centre,
Hasland Road. Wednesday 1.30pm - 3.30pm

GRASSMOOR - Community Centre, New Street
Thursday 10.00 am - 12 noon

STAVELEY - Staveley Library
Mondays & Thursdays 9.30am - 12.30pm
From January 2017, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30am - 12.30pm

Bolsover District

44 Patchwork Row, Shirebrook, NG20 8AL
Tel: 01623 748161 Fax: 01623 743316
Monday - Thursday 9.00am - 11.30am

BOLSOVER - Bainbridge Hall, Carr Vale
Monday 1.30pm - 4pm
From January 2017, Community Centre, Recreation
Close. Wednesday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

CLOWNE - Mill Street, Tuesday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

CRESWELL - Limestone House, Elmton Road,
Thursday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

PINXTON - Village Hall, Kirkstead Road,
Tuesday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

Amber Valley

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

HEANOR - Salcare, Ray Street, Friday 8.30am - 12.30pm

SOMERCOTES - Parish Hall, Nottingham Road,
Monday 1.30pm - 4.00pm

Management Committee 2015/2016

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

Trustees

Cllr Graham Baxter MBE	Nicolo Ferrera
Ian Rutledge	Elaine Tidd
John Knight	Cllr Amanda Serjeant
Hilary Cave	Barry Johnson
Keith Myhill	Karen Seymour
Cllr Mary Kerry	Sarah Roy
Rueben Redhead	Angela Webster
Cllr Mary Dooley	Cllr Steve Marshall-Clarke

All at DUWC wish John Bradley (Snowy) a long and happy retirement and thank him for his endeavors on behalf of the organisation.

Centre Staff 2016

Colin Hampton	- Co-ordinator
Andy Parkes	- Assistant Co-ordinator/Welfare Rights Advisor
Lynn Bagshaw	- Administrator
Tim Wilkinson	- Welfare Rights Advisor
Katrina Hudson	- Welfare Rights Advisor
Glynn Power	- Welfare Rights Advisor
Justine Bark	- Welfare Rights Advisor
Paul Marklew	- Welfare Rights Advisor
Brigit Long	- Welfare Rights Advisor
John Power	- Welfare Rights Advisor



Thanks

To all our funders, our Management Committee,
our OFFA Contributors and all our supporters.



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