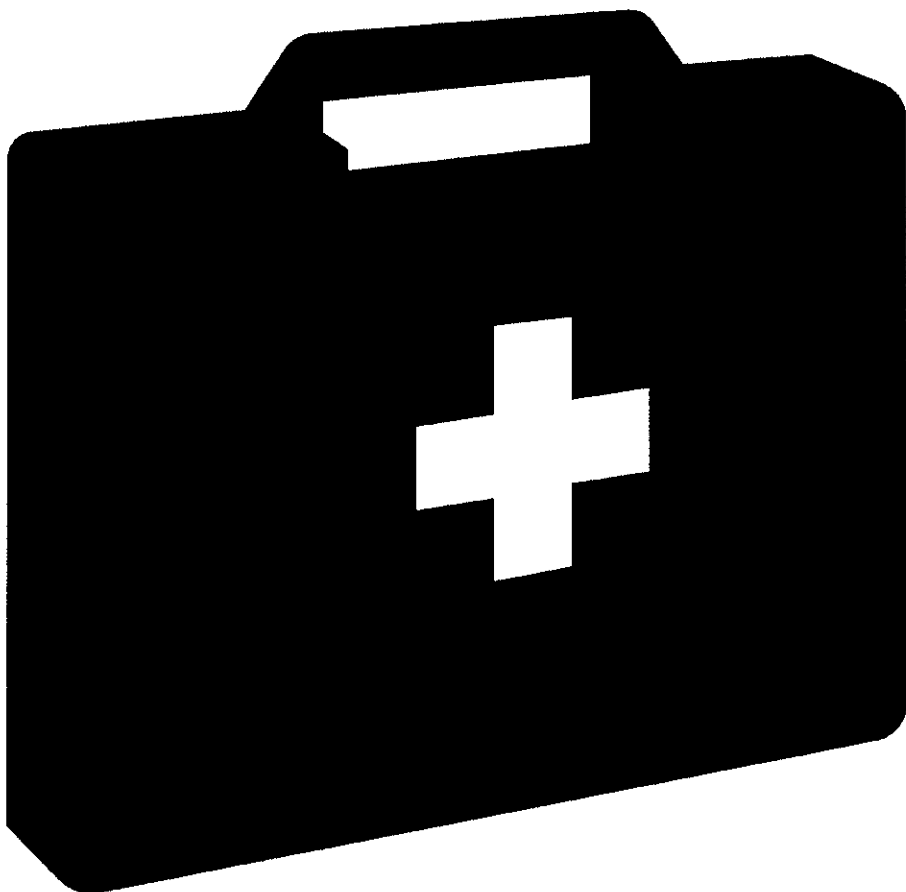




Derbyshire
Districts

**Elmwood
Medical Centre**



Our year in snapshot...

**88
clients
helped**

**£163,450
in benefits
and grants
secured**

**194
client
contacts**

By helping people deal with redundancy, debt, homelessness, poverty and the impact of relationship breakdown, we not only provide immediate relief and support for individuals but also reduce costs of health and local authority interventions.

Our clients come to us with **more than one issue** requiring our advice.



Average is **5** queries per client.

**"Thank you so much
for your help. Now I
can start to get my life
back on track."**



Our advice helps people stay in work, prevents housing evictions and keeps families together.



Our GP and community outreach programme is one of the largest in the country. Our advisers are based in **66** surgeries, medical practices and outreach locations.



The impact and success of this project is very much down to the strong, professional and positive partnership between our Advisers and the GP surgery.

We would like to thank all the medical and business staff at Elmwood Medical Centre for their help and support over the last year.

Together we are changing lives.

Across Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts...

**19,056
clients helped**

**97,432 issues
advised**

**£7.9m debt
managed**

**£12.5m
secured in
benefits and
grants**

Our Outreach service at Elmwood Medical Centre...

"Our clients come to us with problems... they leave us with solutions."

GP Outreach Adviser



Our advice sessions for the surgery run on Thursday afternoons.

The surgery serves the local community in Buxton.

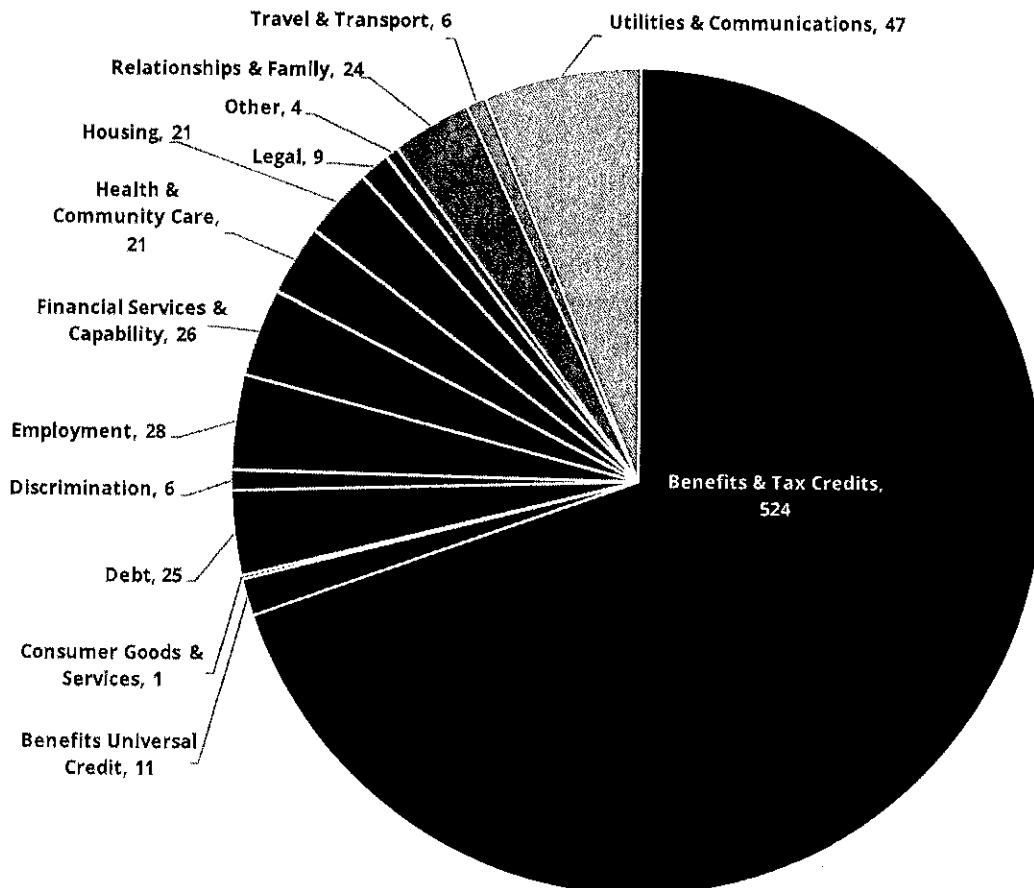
We see a wide age range of clients, however our clients are more likely to live on a low income, be unemployed, rent their home, be disabled or have a long term health condition, and not have access to the internet.

Many require particular support and advice around entitlement and changes to benefits which can impact on their lives resulting in debt and housing issues.

Why we're needed...

Total number of issues dealt with: 753

Elmwood Medical Centre



The difference we make...

Isaiah attended our GP Outreach advice session with his wife Jermima. They live in housing association property and are in receipt of, war pension disablement benefit (WP), State Pension (SP), Pension Credit (PC), Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Support (CTS).

Isaiah was a veteran – he had been physically injured during conflict and was unable to mobilise without severe pain, he also had a diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Jermima was his carer.

Isaiah had been awarded the middle rate care component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and the high rate mobility component of DLA due to the injuries he had sustained which had been assessed at 40%. He was invited to make a claim for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and had scored 0 points for both components – Isaiah had asked the DWP to reconsider his case, the original decision was upheld. Because of this Jermima's carer's addition had been stopped. As a result, they were £156.75 worse off a week.

Isaiah asked Citizen's Advice (CA) to assist him to appeal to tribunal. He wanted his appeal decided by a paper hearing as the stress of attending a tribunal would be too much for him.

Isaiah was made aware that it is more difficult to win an appeal on paper and he was strongly advised to attend. Isaiah was adamant that he would not attend even if it meant losing.

Citizens Advice obtained Isaiah's medical records and completed a paper appeal which was submitted.

The tribunal awarded Isaiah the enhanced rate of the mobility component of PIP. He received a lump sum **backdated benefit** payment of **£2,629** and his benefit income **increased** by **£59.75 per week**.

He was awarded 7 points for the daily living component and therefore one point short of being awarded this. We have written to the tribunal judge to request a statement of reasons as to why they have come to the decision they have, with a view to see if there are grounds to challenge the decision further and award Isaiah the standard rate of the daily living component.



Outcomes in summary...

Increased by £59.75 per week

Backdated benefit payment of £2,629

The difference we make...



Danny was referred to us for help by his GP. Some time ago, the Local Authority informed him that his Housing Benefit would be reduced by £100 per week because of the benefit cap. He is a single parent with four school age children he was finding it very difficult to manage and he had not been paying the full rent on his house, because of this he had rent arrears with the Housing Association.

Danny already had issues, and this situation was making his health worse. We telephoned the Rent Officer to explain the circumstances and negotiated for Danny to pay an extra £5 per week to cover the arrears and prevent action being taken against him. To reduce the impact of the benefit cap in the short term we helped Danny to apply for a Discretionary Housing payment which was awarded at the rate of **£12 per week**.

Our initial exploration identified that one of his children had been diagnosed with learning difficulties. We therefore helped Danny to apply for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for the child. With the help of reports from school, the child was awarded DLA care and mobility totaling **£79.99 per week**. Danny used this DLA to pay for a tutor for the child and for him to attend an after-school art club.

With the aid of a supporting letter from his GP we applied for Danny to be allocated in to the Support Group of Employment Support Allowance (ESA). This meant that Danny was an **extra £37.65 per week** better off. Because of the DLA and Danny being in the Support Group of ESA the benefit cap no longer applied and his Housing Benefit was **increased by £100 per week**. He also became entitled to an increased award of Tax credits amounting to **£62.99 per week**. This was backdated which he received as a lump sum and he used this to pay the rent arrears off in full.

Because of our intervention through the referral from the GP Danny no longer had the worry about not being able to pay the rent. The quality of their lives has improved, and they were financially better off by a total of **£280.63 per week**.

Outcomes in summary...

Disability
Living
Allowance =
£79.99pw

Tax
Credit =
£62.99pw

Housing
Benefit =
£100.00pw

Employment
Support
Allowance =
£37.65pw

Total = £280.63 pw

Annual income gain £14,592.76

The difference we make...

Julie attended the GP outreach with her husband Terry when they had needed help to complete forms for a reassessment of his health-related benefits. Terry has long term health problems after an accident at work, and Julie is his carer. Both clients have some difficulties with reading and writing complex information. They have been guardians for their two grandchildren aged 6 and 8 since their early childhood.



During the appointment, Julie mentioned that the eldest grandchild was experiencing difficulties around speech and language. The adviser explored this further. Julie explained that initially it had been thought that these difficulties were due to impaired hearing and traumas in early childhood. This had now been disregarded as the cause, and they had been recently advised by health staff that he has delayed development, including difficulties with comprehension and retention, and profound speech and language delays. He also has poor coordination and balance. Julie described multiple issues around social interactions, problems with toileting, sleeping (night terrors), and anxiety.

Our clients informed that they are very active in supporting their grandson to try to learn basic life skills and to support his learning and coordination through recommended activities. They have high outgoings due to Terry's complex health needs but felt they were just about managing to make ends meet.

The adviser suggested to them that their grandson may be entitled to Disability Living Allowance (DLA). Full advice surrounding entitlement was given and it was explained this would not affect their current benefits in a detrimental way and may give rise to additional premiums if awarded.

Julie was helped to commence a claim over the telephone at the appointment and returned later for help to complete the claim form. The adviser explored further the issues surrounding her grandson's behavior and development and it was apparent that he requires substantial and prolonged help with both physical and developmental needs, and supervision when walking outdoors beyond that expected for his age to keep him safe.

Some weeks later, Julie's grandson was awarded the middle rate of DLA for his care needs, for an initial two-year term, backdated to the original date of the telephone claim. He was not awarded the mobility component which was later challenged but upheld.

We advised that the award of the care component gave rise to an increase in their child tax credits and Terry could claim a carer premium increasing their benefit entitlement further. We assisted our clients with this and provided advice on other options of maximising their income.

Julie stated that following our advice, assistance and subsequent increase in household income they have been able to buy equipment and toys to support their grandson's learning. They can now pay for taxis to regular swimming sessions which help his social interactions with his peers, and they feel they have an improved capacity to manage and they have less worries about money. The income gain to the family was **£159.39 pw (£8,288.28 per annum)**

Outcomes in summary...

Income gain of £8,288.28 per annum

The difference we make...

Alison came in because following a new assessment she had had her Personal Independence Payment (PIP) award reduced which meant that she would no longer be entitled to her mobility car.



Alison was very upset because her walking was severely restricted, and she was not able to use public transport. She wanted to know if there was anything she could do. We advised her that she could ask for a Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) and she asked for help with this. We drafted the MR for her and challenged each point of the decision. We made reference to the fact that the decision had been made on the basis of a medical assessment only and without the use of any evidence from her GP or Consultant.

The outcome of the MR was that the decision was changed, and the award was increased to the enhanced rate of mobility which in effect gave her an **extra £38 per week** (over the standard rate). In practice rather than be paid the mobility element of PIP it meant that she could remain on the Motability scheme and keep her car without the need for her to go through an appeal process.

Outcomes in summary...

MR decision changed, awarded an extra £38.00 pw



Beryl came in because she had without notice been barred from using the services of a local bus company. This was because of an altercation she had on one occasion with another passenger. Beryl is entirely dependent on using public transport. Being unable to access local bus services meant she was forced to suspend many of her activities and it was having a detrimental impact on her well-being. She had got to the stage where she could not manage and came to an outreach for help.

The adviser completed an online communication via the Bus Company's website setting out Beryl's grievance and an apology for her part in the original incident. Within a week Beryl had received a written response from the Bus Company advising her that she would have full access to the service in the future and apologising for what transpired to be the independent actions of the bus driver. There have been no further problems and Beryl has been able to continue all her regular activities and her wellbeing has improved as a result.

