

Citizens Advice Hertfordshire

July 2019



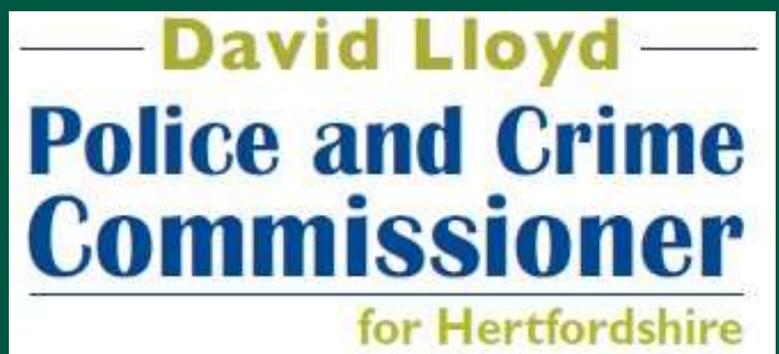
Welcome to our July newsletter for Hertfordshire Citizens Advice Service (HCAS). This newsletter provides useful updates on new and existing projects. Thank you to all of our funders, partners and stakeholders for their investment in the projects across Hertfordshire. This partnership work is vital for the 1.2 million residents across Hertfordshire, as anyone could need Citizens Advice any time in their life.

New Hertfordshire Scam Advice Project

Ever since a report from Action Fraud revealed that, over six months in 2018, 6,272 scams were reported in Hertfordshire **costing victims £12.9m**, Citizens Advice has been looking for a way to tackle this specific problem. Now, due to a grant awarded by the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), HCAS has the opportunity to make a real difference.

HCAS has been awarded a £260,000 grant to fund its new Scams Support and Awareness Project, one of the largest single awards given by the PCC. This project will run for 2 years across Hertfordshire and is poised to help at least 2000 residents directly, and countless others indirectly.

The Grant will be used to employ three scam advisors who will run awareness sessions for the public, provide workshops for other professionals and train 600 volunteers and partners across the county. These volunteers will give specialist face to face advice to those who have been victims of scams and to help prevent vulnerable people becoming victims.



The award follows a successful pilot last year in Three Rivers where over 400 people were supported and helped to avoid having money fraudulently taken.

For advice and more information on these
and other Hertfordshire-wide Citizens Advice projects
Please call **03444 111 444**



Hertfordshire

Crisis Intervention Project

2016-19

At the end of its third year, the Crisis Intervention Project has continued to support residents in crisis. The project has supported **4,171 clients** this year. On average each client presented with **3.4 issues each**, demonstrating the need for our holistic advice model and emphasising the support that clients across Hertfordshire need from our team.



The Caseworkers across the county have continued to work hard to support clients with their most pressing issues, from urgent food vouchers to bailiffs knocking at the door. Anyone at any time may find themselves in a crisis, which is why the project continues to provide such a vital service.

The team have brought in over **£3.3 million in financial gains** for Hertfordshire's most vulnerable families, ranging from income gains such as benefits identified to maximise a client's household income, debt write offs or debt relief orders. We also have a very high success rate of Welfare Benefits Appeals, supporting clients to make an appeal from initial contact right through to representation at Tribunal. The project also provides the Hertfordshire **British Sign Language (BSL)** advice service for deaf and hard-of-hearing clients via our specialist advisor Redmond Kaye.

GambleAware for Hertfordshire

Gambling has become a significant public addiction problem in Britain since recent changes in legislation.

In Britain, 430,000 people are known to have a gambling problem, with another 2 million at risk of developing one. Reports tell us that one person can directly affect 6-10 additional people gambling, putting the number that could be affected at 2.5-4.3 million.



Citizens Advice has been commissioned by GambleAware (an independent charity tasked to fund research, education and treatment services to help reduce gambling-related harm) to deliver Gambling Support Services across Hertfordshire. Recently launched by the Bishop of St Albans, this new service delivers across the country by raising awareness of gambling-related harm (GRH) through advice sessions and signposting to specialist support. Citizens Advice Stevenage will be providing education and training to organisations with frontline workers to prevent and minimise GRH, particularly with vulnerable groups. They will attend local and national events to raise awareness of GRH and the services that are available to those affected.

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