



Crisis Intervention

Q2 report 2020/2021

Delivered by Citizens Advice Hertfordshire



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Summary

This is a summary of Crisis Intervention achievements for the last 3 months. Citizens Advice offices across Hertfordshire are here for everyone, whenever they need us. Hundreds of volunteers are delivering advice remotely and our specialists are carrying out telephone appointments. Some face to face services have reopened and some offices are starting to deliver video advice. We are working closer than ever with partners to identify and address emerging issues across the county.

We have responded proactively to the changing needs of our clients over the last 3 months. Our Hertfordshire Crisis Intervention service ensures some of our most vulnerable clients get the support they need, at a time of great uncertainty.

People helped with Crisis Intervention	719 unique clients 930 overall clients	Financial gains	£250,762
People helped with Welfare Benefit Appeals	45 unique clients 88 overall clients	Financial gains	£128,036
People helped in crisis via British Sign Language	45 unique clients 72 overall clients	Financial gains	£75,857

Overall

809

Unique clients helped

1,090

Overall clients

£454,655

In financial gains

86%

Of clients were able to access advice that suited their needs

92%

of clients were financially better off as a result of our advice, information and support

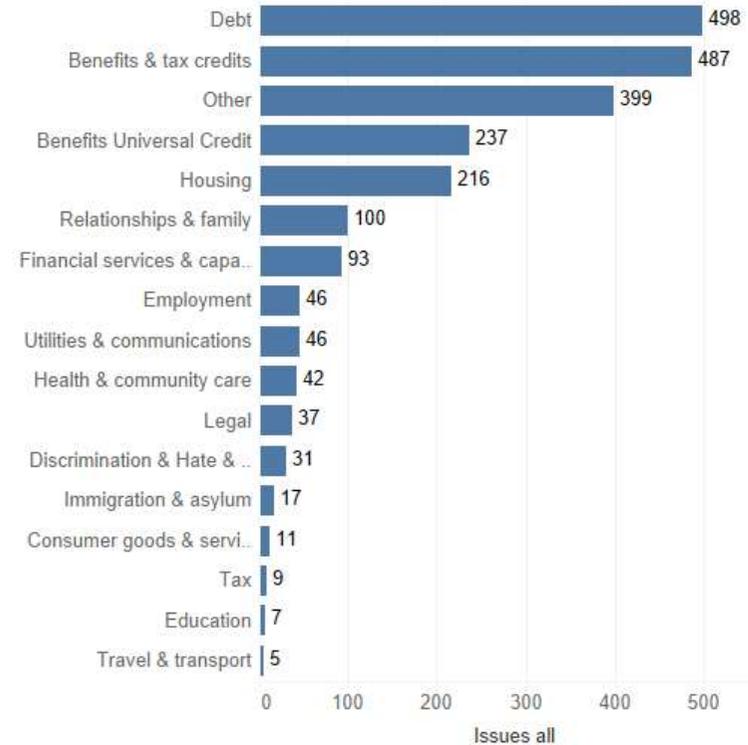
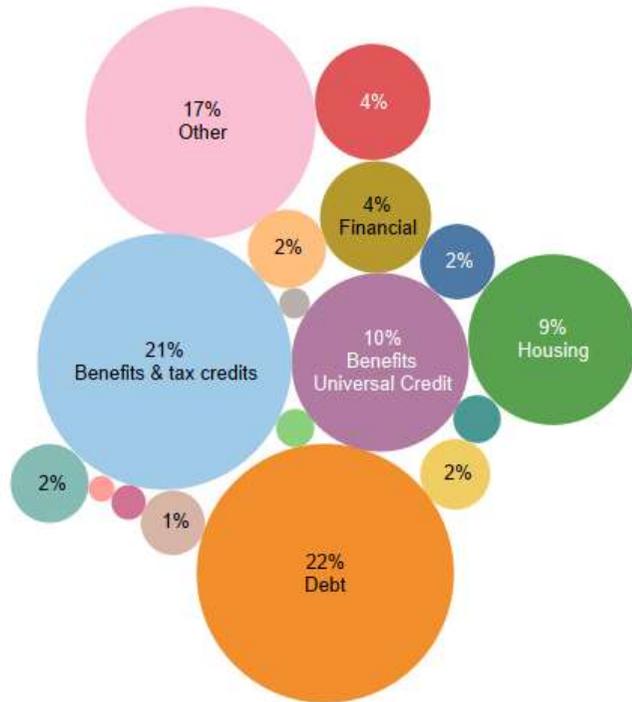
84%

of clients said that their wellbeing improved as a result of our advice, information and support

Advice Issues and demographics

Office group
Multiple values

Part 1 issues %



Our robust case management system allows us to analyse the types of issues our clients need support with in detail. As the above graph shows, our most in demand advice area is debt, closely followed by benefits advice. The pandemic has knock on effects on residents' finances. People need help to address their debt issues, and to seek support through the benefits system for reductions in income. The 'other' section above relates to those needing support with food or charitable payments.

In this table, we have broken down the top three issues in more detail, which shows the range of our clients' issues.

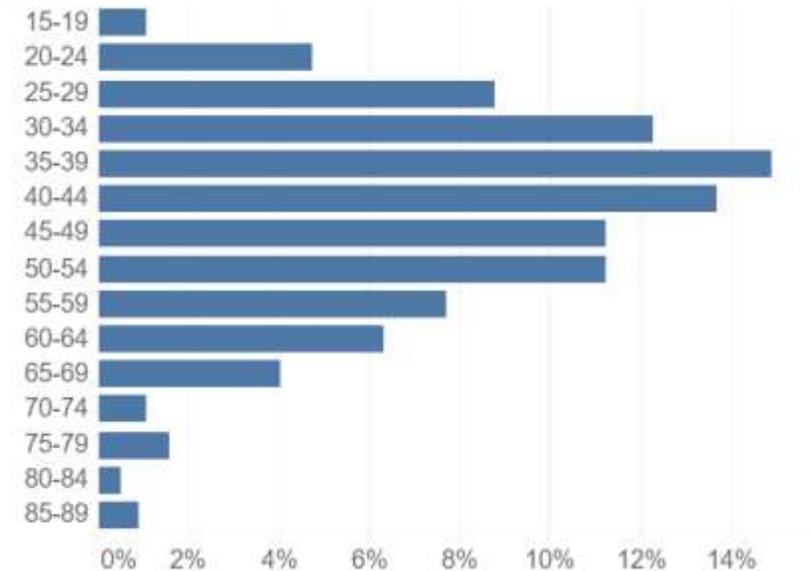
Debt	Benefits	Other
Council Tax arrears	Personal Independence Payment	Food Banks
Fuel debts	Council Tax support	Applications for charitable support
Debt Relief Orders	Housing Benefit	Support in kind (clothes, furniture etc)

We are able to capture additional information through our case management system to show the demographics of those using the service. In Q2, we can see that there is a higher percentage of females accessing the service (62%). There has been a drop in the number of men coming to us and going into Q3, we will monitor this. We can also see that our largest age group is those aged 35-39 and that 51% of our clients have a disability or long term health condition.

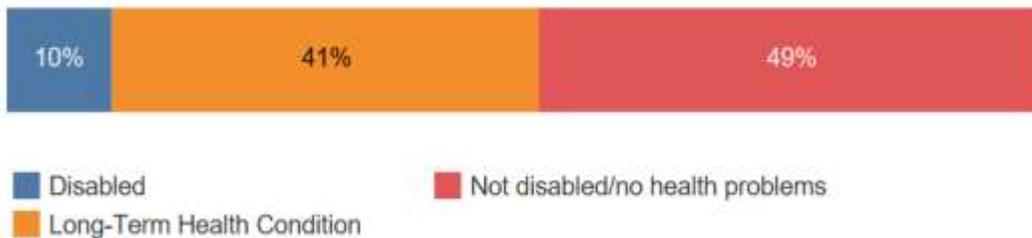
Gender



Age



Disabled / Long term health condition



Launching the Hertfordshire Economic Recovery Team (HERT) in Partnership with the Money Advice Unit

Set to launch for clients in November 2020, working in partnership with the Money Advice Unit, the joint Hertfordshire Economic Recovery Team will be working with the most vulnerable residents who need debt and benefit advice. Four specialists will work county wide for 12 months to reach, assist and advise those with complex financial, benefit and debt problems. Two will be based within Citizens Advice Hertfordshire and will specialise in Debt cases and two will be based within the Money Advice Unit specialising in Benefit cases.

Progress to date:

- 2 Debt advisers recruited and their Debt Specialist Training is underway, in line with the AQS, MaPs and FCA requirements for money advice
- Detailed reporting framework agreed between partners and commissioner
- Development of the referral pathway with MAU to be shared with partners upon launch
- Publicity work carried out on both county and district levels



Meet Michaela*

Michaela was referred to us by our Adviceline service. She got in touch to explain that she needed help completing her Personal Independence Payment (PIP) form.

She is dyslexic and suffers with severe anxiety, which can cause her some distress when filling in forms of this nature. She advised us that she needs a lot of support.

Michaela was anxious about filling in her form correctly, so we asked Michaela to post her PIP form to us and we completed it over the telephone with her, going through each question in detail to ensure the form accurately reflected her health conditions.

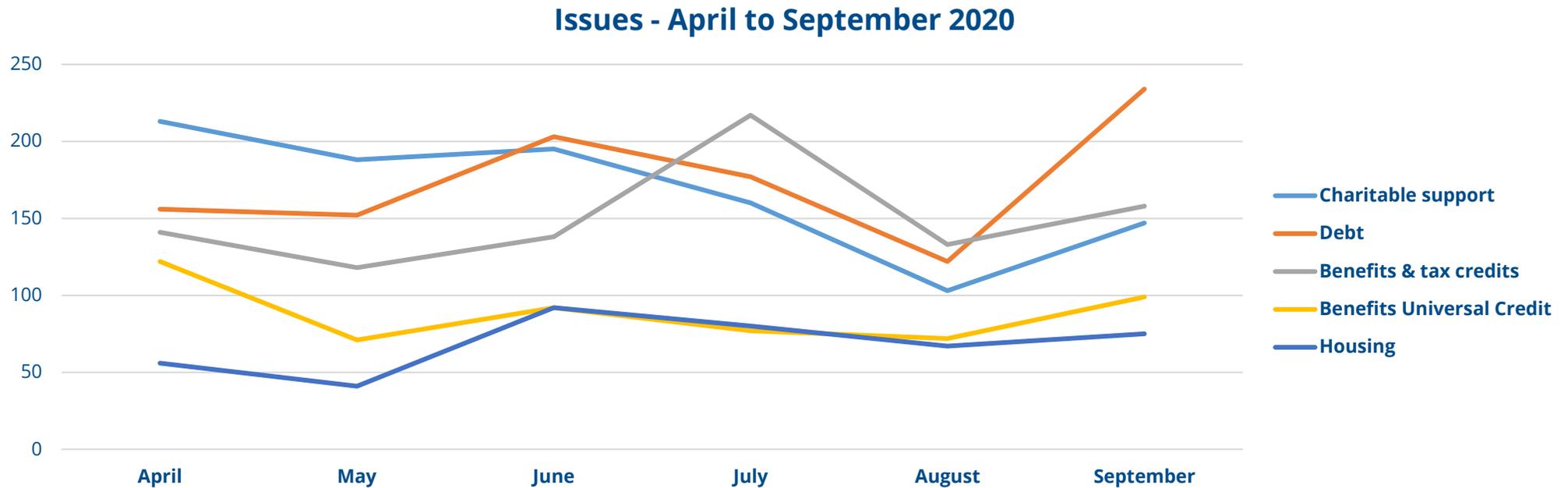
We helped her to make a successful application and she was awarded PIP at the standard rate for both daily living and mobility, based on the form alone.

Michaela now receives over £300 every four weeks, meaning she is better off by over £4300 each year. Michaela told us she is really happy about the outcome as she can now get help in her home and support when she needs to go out.

***name changed for confidentiality**



Trends so far and moving into Q3



The needs of our communities are changing daily, but we are on hand to move people forward and get them the help they need. Our data is an excellent resource to identify and track the spikes and declines in demand, giving us a clearer picture of what demand may look like in the future.

You can see there is a steep incline for debt advice in the last month, in line with the start of term and many people returning to work. July saw a spike in benefits advice, specifically for Personal Independence Payment. We can see that all our top 5 issues increased in September.

Going into Q3, all offices in Hertfordshire are continuing to monitor the development in financial support available for those out of work, plus changes in the housing sector with the eviction ban being lifted. The need for advice in a crisis is vital. There is still uncertainty facing our communities but our teams are prepared and ready to give clients the advice and support they need. We are here for everyone, whenever they need us.



Citizens Advice Hertfordshire

www.hcas.org.uk

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