

Citizens Advice Hertfordshire Newsletter

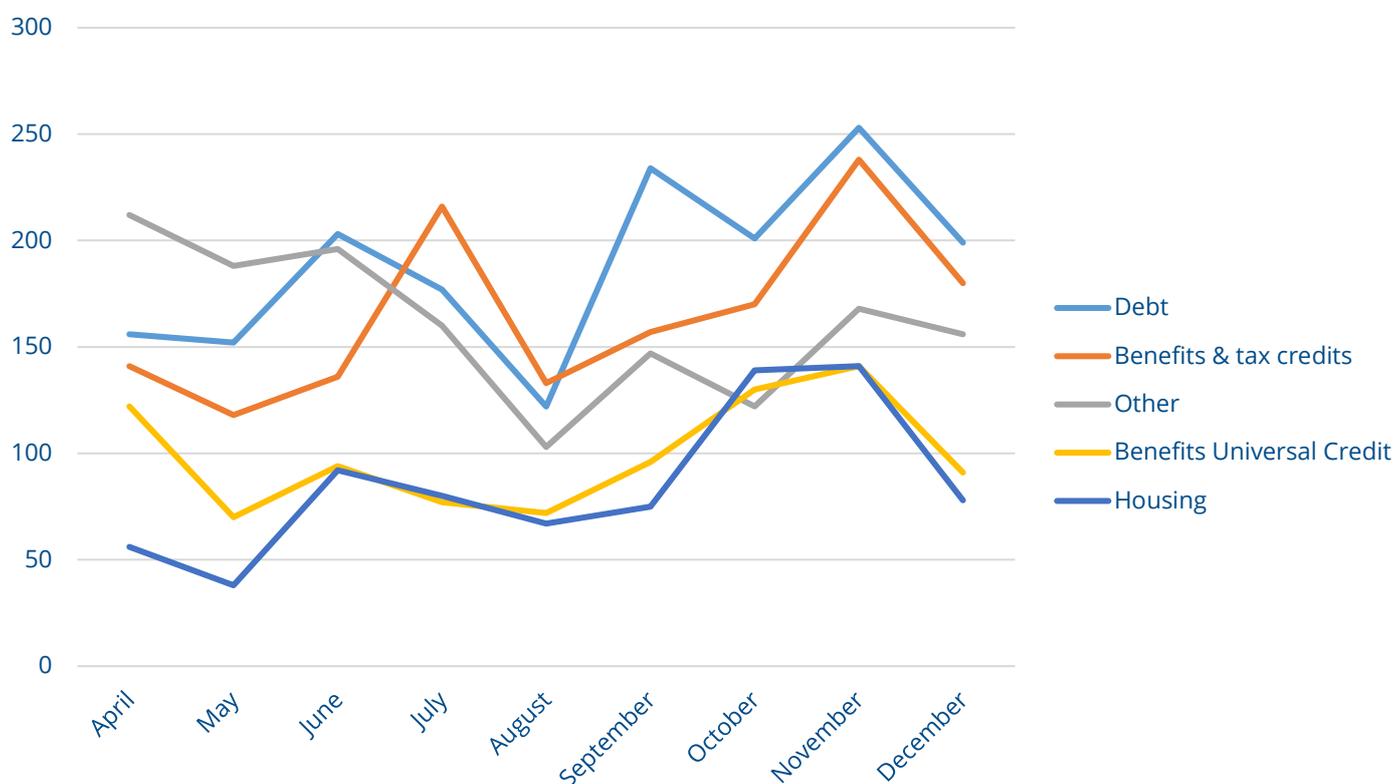
January 2021



Happy New Year and welcome to our January newsletter. The Hertfordshire Citizens Advice Service newsletter provides updates on our county-wide projects. Thank you to all our funders, partners and stakeholders for their investment in and support for our work; this partnership work is vital for the 1.2 million residents of Hertfordshire, any of whom could one day need our help.

COVID-19 - Updates

Issues - April to December 2020



Over the last 9 months, we can see that the needs of our county are constantly changing. We saw high demand overall in November, at the peak of the second lockdown, with debt, benefits and tax credit enquiries being at their highest.

Going into Q4, all offices in Hertfordshire are continuing to monitor the development of the national lockdown and react to changes in policy and legislation to ensure our clients get the most up to date advice and support. Life is complicated and uncertain, but our team is here to support people in trouble and help them move forward.

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Crisis Intervention - Performance Q3

946

Unique clients

1,232

Overall clients

£529,464

In financial gains

This is a summary of Crisis Intervention outcomes for 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 Crisis Intervention - Q3	870 unique clients 1,108 overall clients	Financial Gains	£366,134
People Helped Welfare Appeals - Q3	43 unique clients 69 overall clients	Financial Gains	£106,535
People Helped British Sign Language - Q3	33 unique clients 55 overall clients	Financial Gains	£56,795

94%

Of clients were able to access advice that suited their needs

93%

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

82%

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

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Scams Support and Prevention Project

National lockdowns have created cruel opportunities for scammers. In this newsletter, we are sharing a message from the Neighbourhood Watch team regarding COVID-19 vaccine scams.

We have been advised about a new scam that is doing the rounds, but looks very believable and therefore highly dangerous. It starts with a text, seemingly from the NHS saying that they are now eligible to apply for the new vaccine and to click on the link to apply. The link takes you to a website, which looks genuine and asks the user to complete a form asking for the following information.

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Address
- Payment card details
- Proof of address

As you can see from the above, this should automatically ring alarm bells, as we all know, the vaccine is FREE.

Please ensure you follow the below guidance

- Do NOT click on links in unknown texts - always check it first
- NEVER give out your personal details.
- With the recent approval of multiple vaccines in the UK, these types of scam attempts are likely to continue as fraudsters look to take advantage of the rollout to so many people.
- Cold calls regarding the vaccine are also beginning to take place – we've already had reports of scammers asking people to pay for it over the phone. If you receive one of these calls, hang up.

Published: 5/1/21

Scam text about Covid-19 vaccine

A dangerous fake NHS text has been circulating, telling people they're eligible to apply for the COVID-19 vaccine. Here's what it looks like.

Wednesday, 30 December 2020

A NHS: We have identified that your are eligible to apply for your vaccine. For more information and to apply, follow here : uk-application-form.com

This URL takes you through to an extremely convincing fake NHS website that asks for your personal details

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NEVER give out your personal details.

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Protect others by reporting incidents like this. If you, or anyone you know, have been affected by this fraud or any other scam, report it to **Action Fraud** by calling **0300 123 2040** or visiting **www.actionfraud.police.uk**



Neighbourhood Watch Network is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered in England and Wales, no: 1173349

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GambleAware Project

Citizens Advice has been commissioned by GambleAware, an independent charity tasked to fund research, education and treatment services to help reduce gambling-related harm (GRH), to deliver Gambling Support Services across Hertfordshire. Citizens Advice Stevenage provides education and training to organisations with frontline workers to prevent and minimise GRH, and attends local and national events to raise awareness of GRH and the services that are available to those affected.

Our project worker has continued to provide advice and support via digital means for our clients during the COVID-19 pandemic and offers online training to frontline workers. Want to know more? Get in touch with our Stevenage office on admin@castevenage.org.uk

British Sign Language (BSL) project

Citizens Advice works hard to ensure the service that it provides is as inclusive as possible. Now, thanks to funding from Hertfordshire County Council, we can offer advice directly to clients in Hertfordshire who communicate using British Sign Language (BSL), Sign Supported Language (SSE), or lip-speaking. Redmond Kaye, who is deaf himself and whose first language is British Sign Language, is based at Citizens Advice Welwyn Hatfield at its Queensway offices in Hatfield, offering county-wide support

To contact the Deaf Advice Service, text 07756 148591 (standard network rates apply) or email bsl@whcab.org.uk

Welfare Benefit Appeals project

Our Welfare Benefit Appeals project supports, advocates for and represents clients at tribunals, when their benefits applications have been turned down. The appeals caseload is intensive, and requires in-depth understanding of welfare benefit rules and regulations. Our caseworker prepares detailed appeal submissions on behalf of clients and continues to support at tribunal where possible. 90% of appeals prepared by our caseworker are successful, compared with the national average of 64%.

To contact the Welfare Benefit Appeals service, you can contact appeals@castevenage.org.uk



For advice, speak to our advisers today on
Please call 03444 111 444