

Our combined statistics for the 10 local offices- (April 1st 2021– March 31st 2022)

Clients helped: 43,139

Issues seen: 162,101

Clients better off by: £24,113,458

Client quotes

“This organisation is an absolute lifesaver. I can now sleep at night... It is impossible to express my full gratitude for all the advice and assistance that Citizens Advice has given me” - North Herts resident

“My issues were dealt with the upmost respect, compassion and no judgement at all. The adviser was really kind, helpful and full of knowledge.” - Watford resident

“Just a great bunch of people with plenty of knowledge and good advice!” - Stevenage resident

“ I was so embarrassed to have to talk about the mess I had got myself into – but the kind adviser didn’t judge me at all – just gave me some really useful advice on how to turn things around. I feel so much better now and able to deal with things before I get to the point where I cant cope. Thank you” - Hertsmere resident

**citizens
advice**

Hertfordshire

Website URL: <https://hertscitizensadvice.org.uk/>

Citizens Advice Hertfordshire is a consortium of the 10 local Citizens Advice charities. Each local Citizens Advice (LCA) is an independent charity with its own strategy and priorities, focused on the needs of its local residents.

Citizens Advice Hertfordshire works to maximise the voice of the 10 LCAs and facilitate the county-wide delivery of services where working together is better for our communities.

The consortium allows our member LCAs to share significant skills, experience, and expertise which strengthens their operations.

Our Vision:

All Hertfordshire residents have easy access to the advice services they need.

Our Mission:

To develop the provision of advice services for Hertfordshire residents by working in partnership with the 10 local Citizens Advice charities. We do this by securing funding, forging county-wide alliances, and promoting the impact of our work.

Our Key Objectives:

- To raise funds to meet more of the advice needs of our clients in all 10 Local Citizens Advice localities
- To increase awareness of the work of Citizens Advice in Hertfordshire and our impact on local people’s lives



“The Citizens Advice Service provides excellent value in return for the public funding it receives . It makes a significant contribution to individuals and communities as well as to the process of policy-making and service delivery. Its holistic approach, national coverage and independence are to be cherished.”-

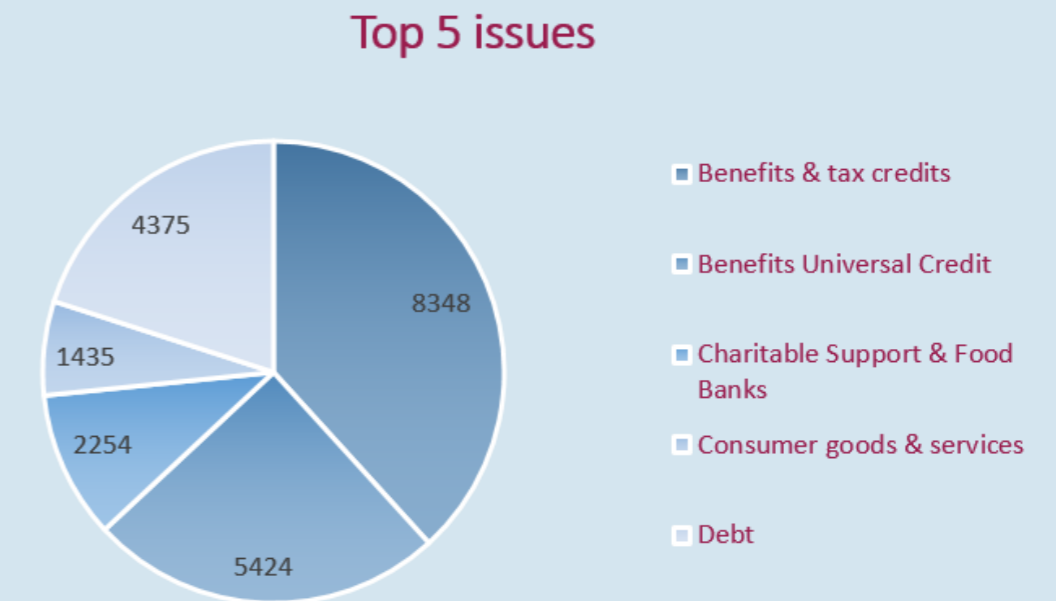
Office for Public Management

Citizens Advice Hertfordshire's current projects:

These projects are all funded by Hertfordshire County Council.

- **Crisis intervention:** Provides advice to people in crisis via advisers based in all 10 LCAs.
- **British Sign Language (BSL):** Provides access to advice in British Sign language for Deaf Hertfordshire residents via a centrally based adviser.
- **HERT:** Hertfordshire Economic Recovery Team is a partnership between Citizens Advice Hertfordshire and the Money Advice Unit to provide debt and benefits casework for our most vulnerable residents.
- **Welfare appeals:** Provides specialist casework supporting people appealing benefits decisions via a centrally based adviser.
- **Household Support Fund:** The 10 LCAs are all helping to distribute HSF supermarket vouchers to people in need.

Our top issues across Hertfordshire since January 2022:



Case study

Background Details

The client was referred to us via Hertfordshire Adviceline. The client is a carer for their disabled son and lives in a Housing Association property. Due to their caring responsibilities, the client is unable to work and was in receipt of Carers Allowance Universal Credit (UC) (including carer's element) and Council Tax support. In addition, their disabled son has been in receipt of Middle Rate Daily Care and Lower Rate Mobility Disability Living Allowance (DLA) since 2016. In a recent review, the Daily Care element was increased to a higher rate and the Mobility element remained at a lower rate. The client received some advice that they should try and get their son a higher rate for mobility as well. The client, therefore, submitted a Mandatory Reconsideration.

As a result the whole DLA claim was stopped. The client immediately lost their Carers Allowance, the Carers element of Universal Credit as well as the DLA. Additionally, they had to register as a Jobseeker which the client felt they could not do as they had to still care for their severely disabled son. As a result, they would then potentially face sanctions and a reduction in their Universal Credit payment.

The client also faced being affected by the bedroom tax as their son was entitled to his own room due to his disability, which without qualifying for DLA he was no longer entitled to. The client's income dropped by £183 per week causing the client to go into debt and forcing the client into hardship and food/energy poverty.

How we assisted the client:

We provided immediate access to food support and direct support through the Household Support Fund.

A referral was made to the Hertfordshire Benefits Appeals Caseworker who took the case on and represented the client at appeal. When the appeal was heard the Tribunal reinstated the DLA at the per Mandatory Reconsideration level.

The result:

- The client had their son's DLA reinstated and backdated and is no longer in debt and suffering hardship
- The client was once again recognised as a carer and the threat of sanction of their UC was removed
- The threat of the bedroom tax being applied to the client was removed
- Improved mental well-being of the client and family
- Evidence Forms were submitted highlighting the deficiencies of the client's treatment and the detriment that this caused the client
- Official complaint letter submitted to the DWP
- The client is willing to share their story to highlight both the deficiencies in the decision-making process and the help that we have been in achieving the outcome for the client and the support that we have been able to give while the decision was appealed.



In 2020-21 the advice we delivered directly saved government and public services at least £618 million-
that's £1.94 for every £1 spent on the service