

Citizens Advice Hertfordshire is a consortium of the 10 local Citizens Advice charities:

**Broxbourne**

**Dacorum**

**East Herts**

**Hertsmere**

**North Herts**

**St. Albans  
and District**

**Stevenage**

**Three Rivers**

**Watford**

**Welwyn  
Hatfield**

Each local Citizens Advice is an independent charity with its own strategy and priorities, focused on the needs of its local residents.



## Our Newsletter

Welcome to Citizens Advice Hertfordshire's February newsletter.

In this month's edition, we update you on our Crisis Intervention project, including a case study, and also a progress report on the new extended hours for the Adviceline provision.

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

## Crisis Intervention Project: Quarter 3 Outcomes

Crisis Intervention is a county-wide project delivered within all 10 Hertfordshire Local Citizens Advice organisations.

Funded by Hertfordshire County Council, its aim is to provide a holistic advice service to Hertfordshire residents in crisis and emergency situations.

### Our top five issues:

- **Utilities & communications (33%)**
- **Debt (16%)**
- **Charitable Support & Food Banks (14%)**
- **Benefits & Tax Credits (14%)**
- **Universal Credit (8%)**

Specialist Advisers based in each district advise clients face to face, by video call, email and telephone on a range of issues.

As well as providing immediate help such as food vouchers and access to the Household Support Fund, they address the root causes of issues, and aim to resolve problems and prevent them happening again.

**98% of clients reported being better off financially after receiving our advice and 96% felt their wellbeing had improved**

### Between September and December 2022, our advisers:

- Helped over 1,200 residents in crisis
- Advised on over 3,100 issues
- Generated over £650,000 in additional income including debts managed, benefits awards and increases, consumer issues resolved, grant applications and food support

## Crisis Intervention Project Case Study: Elena's Story

Elena\* was signposted to us for emergency help by her housing support worker. She is a single mother with two children – a baby and a 10 year old. Elena has anxiety and depression following a bereavement and the effects of a car accident earlier this year. She finds it difficult to engage with people and is being helped by a support worker at her son's school.

Elena told us that she was struggling to manage with the cost of living increasing, and had run up debts with energy and water suppliers. She could not afford to turn on her heating as she was on emergency credit which was being used up quickly with money taken off to pay back the debt.

She was desperate as the weather had turned very cold with snow predicted. She had phoned her energy supplier but ran out of phone credit waiting on hold.

We arranged for a fuel voucher to be issued the same day so that Elena would be able to turn the heating on, and issued a voucher for £200 from the Household Support Fund to help with food costs.

As Elena was anxious about new situations, her support worker asked if our adviser could meet her at her son's school – we agreed and Elena met with our adviser along with her support worker.

We investigated options for dealing with the debts, and found that Elena could apply for grants from the company's Customer Support Fund. Elena was very relieved to hear this and will complete the applications with her support worker.

We learned that Elena had applied for PIP but was turned down. We gave her advice about completing a Mandatory Reconsideration and encouraged her to collate medical evidence to submit to the DWP for help with the challenge. Elena will return to us to complete the Reconsideration and for help with an appeal if needed.

Elena was very grateful for our help, and her support worker at school told us that we were an amazing resource for the community and thanked us for everything we do.

\*name changed to preserve confidentiality

**Citizens Advice in Hertfordshire is here for all Herts residents, whatever your problem**

**We offer practical advice on a wide range of issues.**

**We tailor our service to what you need and offer information, signposting and detailed advice on a range of topics including:**

- **Money matters, including debt and maximising your income benefits**
- **Energy advice including debt and energy saving measures;**
- **Housing**
- **Employment issues**
- **Relationship and family problems**

**Thanks to funding from Hertfordshire County Council, Citizens Advice Hertfordshire's telephone Adviceline is now available on weekday evenings and on a Saturday.**

**This means that you can now call us for advice and guidance at a time more convenient for you.**

**We've extended Adviceline opening hours to cover evenings and Saturdays - meaning that you can call us when it suits you**

Call free on 0800 144 88 48

Monday to Wednesday 10am to 9pm

Thursday & Friday 10am to 8pm

Saturdays 10am to 4pm

**Our extended hours Adviceline telephone support service launched on 12th December 2022, and is now open weekday evenings and Saturdays.**

**In the first six weeks since its launch, we have supported:**

- **Nearly 80 residents**
- **136 issues including benefits, housing, employment, and relationships and family**

## What Our Clients Are Saying...

Very professional on giving the advice and if unsure about certain aspects of the problem would call me back to confirm - very easy to deal with.

My situation is still ongoing and to date the help from Citizens Advice has been most helpful and reassuring.

Excellent service.  
Couldn't be improved.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

All 10 Hertfordshire Citizens Advice offices hold the Advice Quality Standard and are regulated by the FCA for debt advice?

All our advice is subject to rigorous and ongoing quality assessments so you can always be confident in our services

For more details about Citizens Advice Hertfordshire, or to discuss working in partnership with us, please contact Charlotte Blizzard-Welch, our Partnership & Development Manager.

**[Charlotte.Blizzard-Welch@hertscitizensadvice.org.uk](mailto:Charlotte.Blizzard-Welch@hertscitizensadvice.org.uk)**

**citizens  
advice**

**Hertfordshire**

## How to Contact Us



**Citizens Advice Hertfordshire  
Adviceline number is:**

**0800 144 88 48**



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up to receive news from us, or because you are a current partner.**

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