

Citizens Advice Lincolnshire (CAL)

Monica Stark, Chair Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire and CAL Liaison with LCC.

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Scrutiny Committee Meeting

31st May 2022

Our impact in 2021/22

The difference we make in Lincolnshire

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Citizens Advice Lincolnshire

There are currently four separately constituted Citizens Advice charities across Lincolnshire, working in partnership as one: **Citizens Advice Lincolnshire (CAL)**.

Last year **17,016** Lincolnshire clients were helped to resolve their problems by CA.

This excludes clients accessing the national CA website.

LCC's grant of **£278,000** leverages a 1:10 ratio of funding: **£2,840,470**

How we help

People access CAL in different ways:



face-to-face



by telephone



by webchat and email

Citizens Advice Lincolnshire

- Clients access our services primarily through the national telephone platform **Adviceline** which acts as a gateway to our services.
- Demand rose by 269% on this service between October 2021 and March 2022.
- This was due to:
 - The loss of the £20 per week Universal Credit uplift
 - The cost of living crisis
 - The rise in the energy cap
 - The removal of the protective measures that had been introduced during the pandemic (eg no evictions etc.)
- Access to the Household Support Fund

Adviceline

- We were, and continue to be, unable to meet this unprecedented level of demand due to a lack of resources, financial and personnel.
- Of the 42,224 calls made by Lincolnshire residents to Adviceline, we were able to answer 15,428 (36%).
- This is being addressed by trying to recruit paid staff rather than volunteers, where finances allow, but means using reserves in a number of cases. In order to answer 80% of calls we need @15 FTEs.

What we do

- We help people with a range of problems including issues with housing, debt, benefits, employment, relationships, mental health and support people who are facing poverty.
- The number of issues per client has risen in the last year to an average of 4.85, which shows the complexity and time required per client.

Core service

- This is our generalist service that the LCC grant makes a contribution towards.
- 6,867 people accessed the core service, our generalist advice service.
- On average each client had 3.26 issues to resolve

Debt

- 2,698 clients were supported with debt issues.
- The number of clients helped rose from 605 in Qu1 to 1,102 in Qu4, reflecting the issues stated before, but also those accessing the Household Support Fund.

Specialist services

- These services include support around specific welfare benefits.
- The highest volumes are around Universal Credit
- ESA is the second highest
- With housing benefit third

Top issues

- Top issues are consistently Universal Credit/Working Tax Credits
- Top benefit issues are consistently Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

Partnerships

- We cannot achieve everything on our own.
- Partnership working is key to the way forward and what we aspire to do more of across Lincolnshire.

Some of our partnerships include:

- Foodbanks locally & nationally through our work with The Trussell Trust.
- Membership of the LCC Financial Inclusion Partnership.
- District Councils to distribute the HSF and support refugees and asylum seekers
- Also hoping to work with the NHS to provide advice in health settings.

Our value to society

For every £1 invested in our service in 2021/2022, we generated:

£4.04

in savings to
government and
public services
(fiscal benefits)

Total: £9,494,567

£31.66

in wider economic
and social benefits
(public value)

Total:

£74,474,037

£19.36

in financial value to
the people we help
(specific outcomes
to individuals)

Total:

£45,540,014

How we calculate our financial value

It's impossible to put a financial value on everything we do – but where we can, we have.

We've used a Treasury-approved model to do this.

From our robust management information, we've also separately considered the financial benefits to the people we help.

- Keeping people in employment or helping them back to work
- Preventing housing evictions and statutory homelessness
- Reducing demand for mental health and GP services
- Improving mental wellbeing and positive functioning
- Improved family relationships

Our value to this community

Our savings to LCC were **£729,338**
by:

- reducing homelessness
- maximising the income for those we help which prevents more costly intervention

This helps reduce financial difficulty, promotes inclusion and benefits the economy.

This is only one fraction of our true value. We also:

- help local authority rent and council tax arrears to be rescheduled, and reduce the associated administrative costs
- bring an understanding through our campaigns and data

Research and campaigns

Some of our campaigns this year have focussed on:

- Universal Credit
- Scams
- Pension Credit
- Access to free legal advice
- Big energy savings
- Domestic abuse
- Housing



Iryna

- Iryna needed help generating a share code from her pre-settled status in order to apply for temporary accommodation. She had not actually yet applied for EUSS and had no valid ID documents.
- She also had problems with benefits and court hearings.
- We helped her to complete a paper EUSS application and provided her with benefit advice.
- We helped her apply for HSF and Housing Benefit and put her in touch with the homelessness support team.
- She now has a home and a bright future.



What clients say:

"Mrs R save me from a lot of problem. She is my Angel and she is very good person. I'm really thankful she is on my live path. I'm suffer for depression and she show me light in the tunnel. I don't know what happened with me if she do not help me. She is amazing person."

"I was made homeless living in my car, not one person to turn to no help no nothing. I had one phone appointment from Citizens Advice which resulted in them helping me to get my new home. I nearly ended my own life and they (Citizens Advice) saved me".