

Penistone Council

Outreach Project

Project Overview (1)

Client Process

- The service pre pandemic was delivered by Citizens Advice at Penistone Town Hall every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month. Since March 2020 the service has been delivered by a telephone and email provision, following Government guidance.
- The service provides Generalist advice to residents and workers in the Penistone Wards.

Project Overview (2)

- The service is free, confidential and accredited.
- The adviser provides help and support with areas such as debt, money management, benefits, employment and any other issues the clients are facing.

Project Overview

Current Service Delivery

Telephone

- Client telephones Adviceline and call offered to Citizens Advice Barnsley if we have advisers available who are already not taking calls.
- Barnsley advisers answer calls to assist the client with their enquiry and if the client needs a referral to one of our other services i.e. debt or energy, a direct appointment is made.
- Another CA office will answer the phone if all our advisers are currently engaged and either assists clients and provides information to resolve the clients issue or contacts Barnsley for Barnsley to contact the client on a local basis.

Project Overview

Current Service Delivery

Email

- Client emails our website and we aim to respond within 2 working days.
- If we can answer the clients question without requiring further information we will craft a reply and email it to the client.
- If we need further information, the adviser will decide whether we email the client to request further information and then reply as above. If it is more complicated and the client has given their telephone number and permission to ring them, we will telephone the client, gather more information and advise them over the phone.

Project Overview

Current Service Delivery

Client Uses Our Website to Self Resolve Their Issue

- Client goes onto our website and using the information on it, is able to answer their own questions. The information also includes links to other trusted agencies and websites which the client may also find useful.

Comparison of Service Delivery Pre Lockdown with Current Service Delivery (9 month April - December)

ITEM	2019 Pre Lockdown (F2F)	2022 Current Delivery (Digital)
Clients Assisted	46	169
Contracted Target (9mth)	45	75
Issues Assisted With	116	365
Benefit Gain	£51,785	£14,167
Debt Managed	£32,492	£5,102

Issues Dealt With

ITEM	2019 Pre Lockdown (F2F)	2022 Current Delivery (Digital)
Benefits (related to new applications, employment and relationships)	63	202
Employment	8	34
Relationships	2	47

Case Studies

Employment Case Study 1

Client Issue: Client on maternity leave, employer advertising new job without informing client, now clients existing job has changed and the client is confused and unsure as to where she stands.

Advice Given: Advised client fully of her rights and what her employer should have done. Also advised client of who can offer further assistance in this matter.

Outcome for Client: Client now armed with all the information she needed to clarify the situation and to talk to her employer about her rights and what should have happened.

Case Studies

Employment Case Study 2

Client Issue: Client has received a letter from her employer regarding her being made redundant. However her employer is her ex husband who she is currently divorcing. She worked for the company for a number of years and feels the redundancy may be vindictive because of the divorce.

Advice Given: Checked that the client was actually an employee of the company and had been employed for over 2 years, also that client had got a contract of employment, received payslips, paid tax and National Insurance. Established there were no other redundancies and this was the first that the client had heard about it. Advised client and provided links to information sources supporting that the redundancy was not legitimate or within the law.

Outcome for Client: Client now better informed on how to deal with the situation and was able to act without requiring further advice and support from ourselves.

Case Studies

Cost Of Living Case Study 1

Client Issue: Client is separated from their partner and is currently looking after their 5 year old child. Client is in receipt of benefits only and ex partner is not making child maintenance payments of £220 per month as agreed with Child Maintenance Service. Accordingly client is falling behind with rent, utilities and struggling to be able to afford sufficient food for herself and her child.

Advice Given: Completed maintenance check to ensure that the £220 per month is correct, advised client on how to request CMS enforcement for payment also completed benefit check to ensure client is receiving their full entitlement.

Provided client with a food parcel and fuel voucher while she was sorting out her maintenance payments.

Outcome for Client: Client more confident to be able to resolve the maintenance issue and is now able to survive until her next payment of benefits is made.

Case Studies

Cost Of Living Case Study 2

Client Issue: Clients recently moved into the area from another area within the borough. However, client is now struggling financially because the property has had the gas capped off and client is having to use electric heaters to warm the property and is only receiving £220 of benefits per month. Consequently running into various arrears because of current circumstances.

Advice Given: Assisted the client in dealing with the gas connection with both the landlord and British Gas. Also carried out a full benefit check and established that the client appeared not to be getting their full entitlement. Advised client to supply us with their latest benefit letters so that we could investigate this further to ensure they are getting their full entitlements. Because client is spending an excessive amount of money on electricity provided the client with a food parcel and also a fuel voucher.

Outcome for Client: Client extremely grateful for assisting with the gas situation and also will be providing documentation so we can complete a full benefit enquiry. Client also thankful for the food parcel and the fuel vouchers which helped with their electricity costs.

Role of Volunteers In this Service

- Volunteers are currently part of the advice team assisting in replying to client incoming emails and providing the advice and information to resolve the clients issues.
- Volunteers are also involved in the admin of undertaking all the client surveys and obtaining feedback from clients once they have been assisted.
- It is also worth noting that approximately 50% of the volunteers that leave us go into further education or paid employment.

Added Value that CAB Adds To This Contract

- CAB are part of the Barnsley Food Bank Partnership and are a referral agency for food parcels. We, as part of the Food Bank, also receive debt client referrals from Barnsley Food Bank, as part of the support given to clients who receive food parcels.
- CAB are also part of the Fuel Voucher scheme and are able to support clients to access fuel vouchers, provided they meet the criteria.
- CAB also have a number of other funded projects where we can make fast track referrals. These include, debt clients, energy appointments (fuel poverty, carbon monoxide alarms and energy company issues). Along with contracts to deliver support to Berneslai Homes tenants and Council Tax issues

Added Value that CAB Adds To This Contract

- CAB are able to support clients and access other funds and services to support them, i.e. funds for DRO applications, other charitable applications. (Yorkshire Water Trust, British Gas etc.)
- Because of CAB's past relationships, partnerships and engagement with other agencies, creditors etc, CAB is quite often able to negotiate positive outcomes for clients.

Forecast For The Future

- It is anticipated that digital and telephone advice for services will continue at the current level, because since the pandemic, this method of contact has become the new norm.
- It is anticipated that clients will need ongoing support with their finances, housing costs, food and fuel vouchers and benefit entitlements in the future.
- Looking at the economy, it is anticipated that demand for employment advice will also continue, taking into account the number of companies that appear to be struggling financially and potentially looking to close.
- Overall looking at the cost of living and energy costs, it is anticipated that more and more people will need support dealing with these issues and the consequences and its impact on households and relationships.

Thank you