

Citizens Advice Leighton Linlade update to the LLTC Grants Committee on 5 November 2018
Tabitha Park, Chief Officer, CALL

- During the last year, business at CALL has been brisk, as usual with our top advice areas remaining benefits and debt, with many of the debt issues relating to Council Tax arrears and many benefit issues being around disability benefits. I attach a summary of the clients and issues we have dealt with this financial year so far. The number of clients we see remains fairly steady year on year, but the number of issues we deal with is increasing as clients have increasingly complex situations.

-We currently have 6 paid advice and management staff and 50 volunteers. In addition to our advisers, in the last year we have recruited volunteers to help with different roles including book-keeping, Research and Campaigns work, and administration.

-We have mapped our clients against the CBC population and we see many clients who are disabled – around 35% of all our clients. We are working with partnership organisations and CBC to ensure the local population is aware of what we can offer, and that our client we are known to all sections of the community. We also use a column in the local paper to highlight our services.

-Universal Credit is going live for new claimants in Leighton Buzzard from 24th November 2018. We have been undertaking training and preparing for the inevitable challenges and extra work associated with the launch. Universal Support will be being provided under a national agreement negotiated by Citizens Advice from April 2019, and we will tell you more about this when we know more.

-We have secured some additional funding from the Money Advice Service via Citizens Advice, from 15th October onwards. This will enable us to increase our capacity to handle debt cases, and will make a contribution to our overheads. The funding may or may not continue into 2019/2020 and this will be confirmed nearer the time.

-We are actively seeking funding from other sources including providing some specialist debt consultancy and training to another local Citizens Advice.

-We will be holding another fundraising concert, themed 'The Last Night of the Proms' on 9th March 2019 and have already started the preparation work for this.

-We attended a scrutiny committee meeting in July 2018 at CBC to promote our work in the light of potential CBC funding cuts in 2020/21.

-The funding and support we receive from LLTC has again made a huge difference to our ability to offer an advice service to the local community, and is greatly appreciated.

-There have been changes at Bossard House with both customer services and the registrar moving out of the building.

Key Statistics

Citizens Advice Leighton Linlade (member)

03/04/2018 28/09/2018



Summary

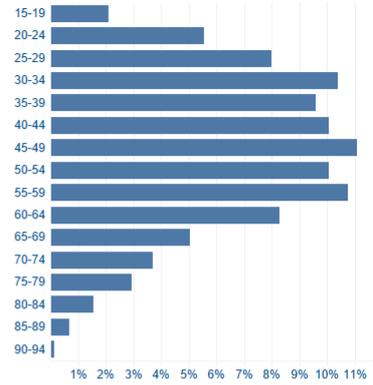
Clients 1,384

Issues 5,531

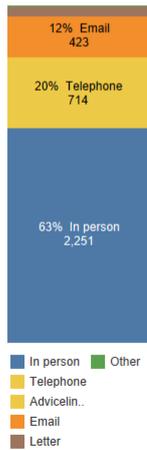
Issues

Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	594
Benefits Universal Credit	11
Consumer goods & services	85
Debt	229
Discrimination	16
Education	27
Employment	212
Financial services & capability	84
Health & community care	63
Housing	221
Immigration & asylum	21
Legal	103
Other	29
Relationships & family	229
Tax	54
Travel & transport	86
Utilities & communications	45
Grand Total	5,531

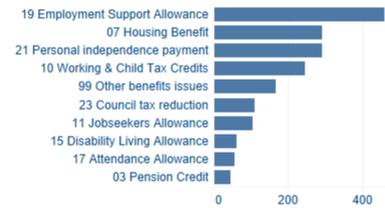
Age



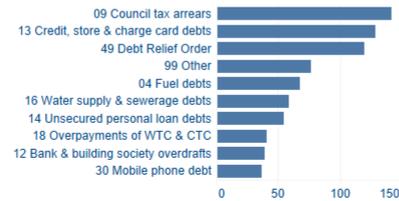
Channel



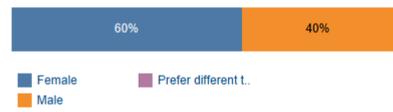
Top benefit issues



Top debt issues



Gender



Disability / Long-term health



Ethnicity

