

# 40 Years of the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres

Pre-1983 1983

1984

1985

1986

1987

1988

1989

1990 1991

1992

1993

1994

1995



1983 saw the first branch for jobs advice by Chesterfield TU and local Authorities to receive the monthly Afterwards, Chesterfield TUC all then to plan the next steps. The first Centre is established by Bob Marshall, Graham Taylor and other leading activists. GSWU Union offers a space for discussions, and the work begins.

Discussions begin with CD in Manager and the Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC) to establish a Staffed Centre in Chesterfield. The Mansfield Services Commission Funds the staffing of the Centre under the Community Programs (CP) initiative. The first building benefits to the DUWC, an established Chesterfield section branch. Some members at Mansfield Engineering in a CBC building and set up the newly formed Joint Advisory Committee for the unemployed. Section quality and the ability to help with skills, particularly in machine repair. Active and Maintenance, Motor Buses and Clothing and the employment of the unemployed.



1996

1997

1998

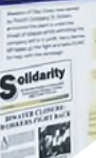
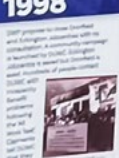
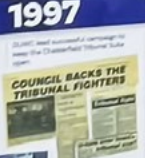
1999

2000

2001

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2003



## 40 Years of the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres Annual Report 2023



# Contents

The Chairman writes .....	4
Goodbye from Matt .....	6
Our Funders 2023.....	7
Statistics.....	8-9
Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) .....	11-12
Help is here – Pomoc jest tutaj .....	13-15
Your Voice, Your Rights .....	18-21
Around the area – Chesterfield.....	22-23
Around the area – Bolsover .....	24-25
Around the area – Amber Valley .....	26-27
Around the area – North East Derbyshire .....	28-29
User Feedback .....	30
Where to get advice .....	31
Trustees 2022/2023 .....	32

## Who are Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres?

Over the 40 years of our existence there cannot be many people in Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire, Bolsover and Amber Valley who have not had a family member or friend that has been touched by unemployment, redundancy, ill health or disability meaning that they have needed advice, help or representation. Many of them will have accessed our services at our main offices or through our outreach sessions.

The organisation has been delivering its services since 1983 and has an enviable reputation locally, regionally and nationally of delivering consistent, quality and very local services without a single break in provision. The DUWC became a Charity in 2016 with 14 trustees drawn from a considerable wealth of support and expertise around the centres.

We aim to prevent or relieve poverty amongst the unemployed, underemployed, unwaged and those in receipt of or entitled to benefits and credits, as well as other disadvantaged people. In addition, DUWC provides a sign-posting service for other services including health, citizen's advice and the



Derbyshire Law Centre. We proactively make our services known to the hardest to reach and most vulnerable within our communities, through targeted campaigning, local advocates and supporters and via our outreach service which is delivered at 15 separate locations. Our three main offices are in Chesterfield, Alfreton and Shirebrook.

## Who funds us?

The Centres are funded by Chesterfield Borough Council and Bolsover District Council, North East Derbyshire District Council and Amber Valley Borough Council as well as support from the DCC Labour County Councillors through the Community Leadership Scheme. Many Town and Parish Councils give funding as well as Charitable Trusts and local and national fund giving bodies. Many local people donate to DUWC, making sure that the organisation is here for them and for others.

## Our Staff and Volunteers

All our paid Welfare Rights advisers started as volunteers and have displayed a huge commitment to the organisation. Together with our volunteers they have brought in £5,607,226 to the local economy in lump sums, additional weekly

payments from benefits gained or recovered. They have made a massive difference to many lives and some of those we help become volunteers.

Ben Glover started with us as a volunteer and is now heading up our project helping former mineworkers and their widows / partners.

A number of new volunteers have joined our ranks this year. They join our team of volunteer advisers. Special thanks to Shirley Pierson and Allison Jarvis at Shirebrook and Colin Bennett at Alfreton, Heanor and Belper and Graham Baxter in Chesterfield. Our Help is Here project has many volunteers and they are acknowledged elsewhere in this report.

New volunteers include Andy Salt, Ann Lambert, Nazneen Zaida and Kate Caulfield. Stella Spencer, Brynon McBeth and Karen McDowell have volunteered during the year. DUWC places on record our thanks to our wonderful team.

**If you are interested in volunteering with DUWC please contact Colin Hampton, via [colin.hampton@duwc.org.uk](mailto:colin.hampton@duwc.org.uk) or 07870 387999.**

# The Chairman writes

**In our 40th anniversary year we welcome the return of grant aid support from North East Derbyshire District Council and Amber Valley Borough Council. Many people residing in these areas use the services of the DUWC, but for up to 4 years, the local authorities had not contributed a penny.**

The consistent support of some parish and town councils meant that people could still access our advice and representation but some outreaches had to be temporarily suspended. Thankfully, we have reinstated all our advice sessions and queues of people are attending once again – and this could not come soon enough with the ongoing cost of living crisis.

We again operate out of 18 different venues, making our face-to-face services accessible to those who need help and support. Whereas more and more people contact us via phone/email and through our website most of our substantial support requires face-to-face meeting.

Matt Hunt, our assistant coordinator, has vastly improved our presence and visibility in social media, as well as taking the many administrative tasks in running a multifaceted organisation with multiple funders, projects and service level agreements. DUWC wish him well with his new endeavours when he leaves us at the end of September to take up a new position at the

Roundabout Homeless Charity in Sheffield. Matt could not resist the temptation to take up a challenge closer to home and, having already worked for Shelter, is well placed to make an impact in their work.

He has certainly been a positive force for us during the last year. We now look for someone new to take up the role building on the foundations he has helped to lay down.

2023 has also seen the retirement of volunteer and staff member Jon Jarvis.

Jon has been a fantastic team member at DUWC. Taking on the many tasks assigned to him and bringing his wealth of experience to our work to the benefit of the many people who have sought advice from him.

Many people do not realise how demanding is the job of an Adviser. As inequality widens and poverty continues to expand the DUWC is at the coalface of the present crisis. This Annual Report is a testimony to all the hard work delivered by our team in service to the people of Derbyshire.



**Graham Baxter MBE,  
Chairman of DUWC's  
Trustees**



## The Co-ordinator writes

**What a year! The wonderful experience of being the coordinator of Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres (I don't always think it is wonderful – you will be not surprised to hear) is meeting all the people who have volunteered, joined the staff team and played a part in our 40 year history. Also, meeting and helping the development of new recruits continues to rejuvenate my enthusiasm for the struggles that lie ahead.**

Our 40th anniversary has brought us into contact with many old friends going back to the 1980s and 1990s, as well as some more recent. Going over the old photos and documentation has been a labour of love and brought many happy memories of the scores of great characters who have been involved as well as the many campaigns we have waged.

The anniversary event, featured on the front cover, was a resounding success. Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary of the TUC, unveiled the mural, and later delivered the John Knight Memorial lecture.

Staff, volunteers and trustees from over the years enjoyed a social event attended by nearly 100 people over the afternoon with some people travelling a long way to be there.

Amongst the celebration, there has been hard work. A big increase in workload for our team of advisors with people being faced with rising prices and rents, essential goods and energy, coupled with more claimants being turned down for benefits to which they are entitled. We have campaigned and lobbied with and on behalf of the many who use our services. Support for individuals and families is important, but the root causes of the problem have to be addressed. We will continue to do so.



**Colin Hampton,  
Co-ordinator of the  
Derbyshire Unemployed  
Workers' Centres**

## Goodbye from Matt

**It is with mixed feelings that I depart from my role as Assistant Coordinator. I am very sad to be leaving prematurely, but have decided to take a management position at a homelessness charity Roundabout in Sheffield, so that I can be closer to my young family.**

I will leave with profound respect and admiration for all those who contribute to the work of DUWC. You will struggle to find a more committed and determined group of staff and volunteers who as are empathetic to the struggles of welfare benefit claimants. After a decade of political attacks, those people at the bottom of the economic ladder are struggling more than ever, and DUWC's service is needed more than ever.

I will certainly continue to support the work of DUWC in the future, and will be a friend of the Centre for life. The service offered by DUWC is so incredibly vital, and, to the shame of our political system, incredibly rare.



**Matt Hunt and son Toby (far right) joined with staff and volunteers at 40th anniversary celebration**

We all have a responsibility, as people who care about the wellbeing and prosperity of vulnerable local residents, to do all we can to ensure that the DUWC continues to survive and thrive for decades to come. Colin is a force of nature – but needs as much support as we can all provide him to keep the legacy of the Centre going.

In Solidarity,  
Matt

# Our Funders 2023

## Local Authorities

- Chesterfield Borough Council
- Bolsover District Council
- Amber Valley Borough Council
- North East Derbyshire District Council

## Parish and Town Councils

- Alfreton Town
- Ault Hucknall Parish
- Belper Town
- Brimington Parish
- Clay Cross Parish
- Clowne Parish
- Eckington Parish
- Grassmoor Parish
- Heanor and Loscoe Town

- Heath and Holmewood Parish Council
- North Wingfield Parish
- Pinxton Parish
- Pleasley Parish
- Shirebrook Town
- Somercotes Parish
- Sutton cm Duckmanton Parish
- Tibshelf Parish
- Warsop Parish

## Grants and Donations

- Community Lottery Fund
- Alex Ferry Foundation
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Coalfields Regeneration Trust
- CISWO

- Henry Smith
- Money Sorted in D2N2 – European Social Fund – Big Lottery Fund
- Tudor Trust
- Derbyshire One Fund For All
- Unite East Midlands Region
- Unite De58 Branch
- GMB Chesterfield Holding Branch
- Thompsons Solicitors
- Graysons Solicitors
- Grassland Hasmoor Futures
- Anonymous Charitable Donations



## Statistics - Appeals totals

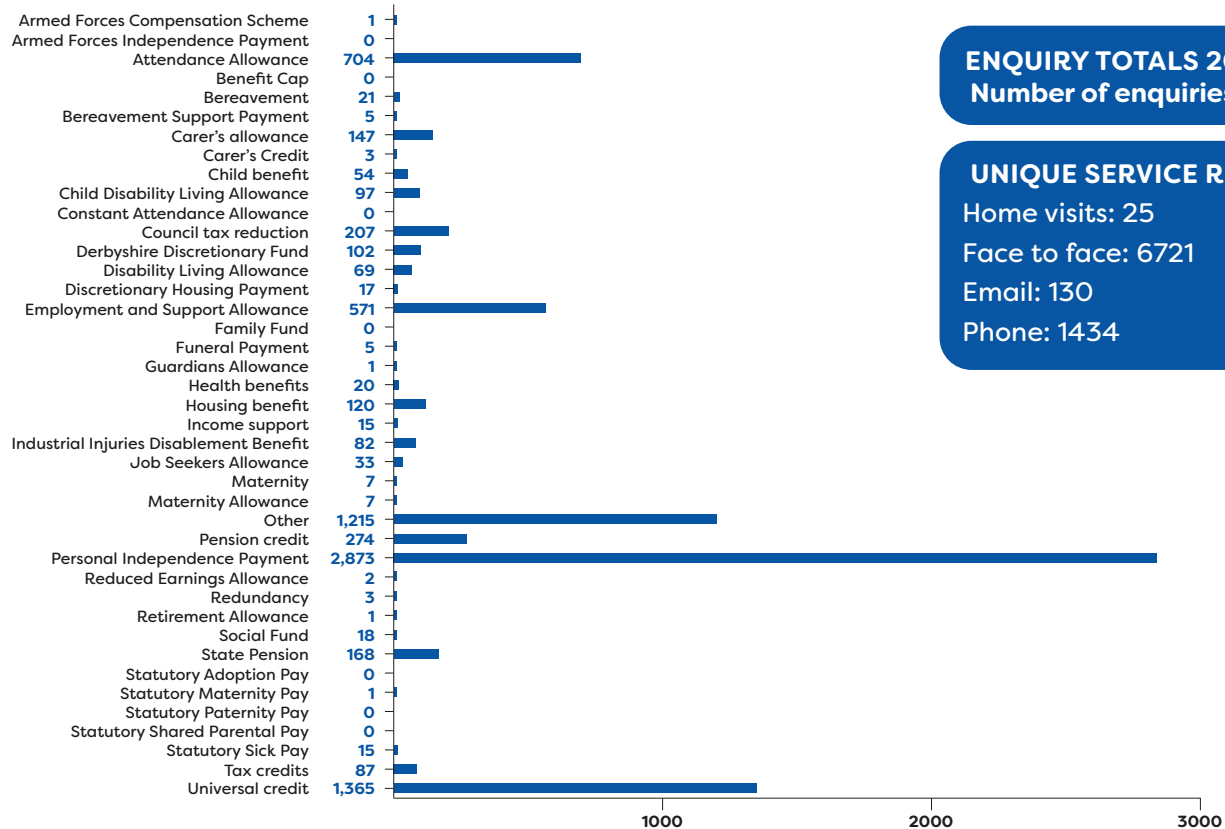
Lead Issue	Abandoned	Pending	Completed	Arrears amount	Weekly amount
Attendance Allowance	4	13	7	£6,463.05	£315.75
Carer's allowance	0	1	2	£4,970.00	£67.25
Child Disability Living Allowance	2	1	8	£13,852.70	£834.40
Council tax reduction	1	0	0	£0.00	£0.00
Disability Living Allowance	1	0	2	£0.00	£0.00
Employment and Support Allowance	9	12	13	£25,036.90	£703.25
Housing benefit	1	0	0	£0.00	£0.00
Income support	0	0	1	£4,400.00	£69.70
Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit	1	3	4	£7,000.00	£36.00
Pension credit	1	0	0	£0.00	£0.00
Personal Independence Payment	121	187	232	£756,835.34	£17,621.52
Tax credits	1	0	1	£800.00	£0.00
Universal credit	18	35	43	£96,026.72	£1,960.15
<b>Totals</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>£915,384.71</b>	<b>£21,608.02</b>

**As a result of these tribunals the following amounts were awarded:** lump sum arrears £915,385. Ongoing weekly benefits £21,608 (over a year this equals £1,123,616). In 2023, general enquiries and take-up work resulted in payments of £3,568,225 for Derbyshire residents. **During the year this has meant a total of £5,607,226 has been won through our advice and representation services across our core work and projects.**





# Statistics - Enquiry Issues (excludes case work)

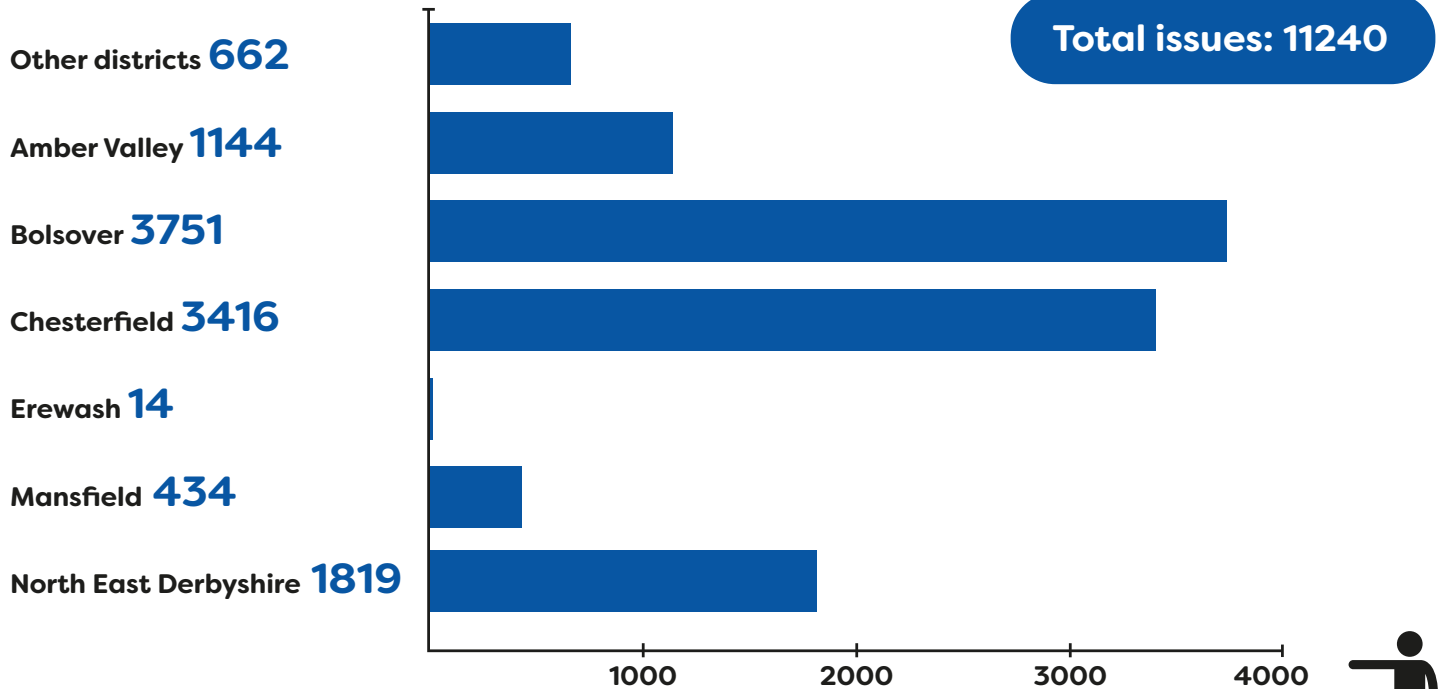


**ENQUIRY TOTALS 2022/2023**  
**Number of enquiries: 8310**

**UNIQUE SERVICE REQUESTS**  
 Home visits: 25  
 Face to face: 6721  
 Email: 130  
 Phone: 1434

# Statistics - Issue Origins

October 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 – September 30<sup>th</sup> 2023



# Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO)



**The Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres' has a long history of supporting mineworkers and their families. We were set up in the early 1980s with big changes taking place in the Derbyshire workforce. Job losses were taking place in coal mining, engineering and in the hosiery industry as well as the wider workforce.**

This is where the DUWC came to the fore, building up a fine reputation for advocacy work and support for people, many of whom had been displaced from Mining and associated Manufacturing.

With the pit closures programme in the early 1990s, local authorities continued to support us helping DUWC to assist and advise redundant miners. Since that time we have continued to see thousands of miners, partners and widows. Our advice and representation is free and confidential. More and more people are now coming to us for advice on entitlements in old-age, in particular pension

credit and Attendance Allowance.

We are concerned that many older miners and partners are not claiming because of a fear of means testing. Attendance Allowance is not means tested and is massively under-claimed. It can mean between £68.10 per week and £101.75 per week for successful claimants. Other benefits to which they may be entitled include Personal Independence Payment, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.

Since April 2023, CISWO have funded



# Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO)



us to be able to provide a proactive campaign to support all mineworkers and their families in Derbyshire, maximising their incomes at a time of an acute 'cost of living' crisis. We are able to offer advocacy and support and representation at Social Security Appeal Tribunals. We also endeavour to make people aware of the services and support that CISWO offers.

We have recruited Ben Glover (pictured right) to work exclusively with this project and he has so far seen 80 former miners, 41 partners or widows of miners and 69 people who identified on registration that they were the son or a daughter of a miner. In March 2024 we will be staging an exhibition Community and Solidarity – an exhibition commemorating the 84-85 Miners' Strike at the Assembly rooms in the Market Hall, Chesterfield. Everyone who attends will be offered the opportunity of a check to see they are getting all they are entitled to in order to help people through these difficult times.



**Ben Glover is working hard to make sure ex miners and families are getting all to which they are entitled.**

## Help is here – Pomoc jest tutaj

**The Help is Here project is funded by the Lottery Community Fund and is a resounding success. Over the last year, the project continued to help Eastern European migrants. We have received an increased amount of Romanian citizens coming to us for assistance, thanks to our wonderful volunteer Daniela Bucuresa, who provides help with translation whenever it is possible.**

We still have a lot of enquiries from migrant communities, who do not speak any English, regarding non-benefits related matters, as contacting HMRC is time-consuming. Although we found it very challenging we managed to help in most cases. These are i.e. reporting at HMRC that they are leaving the UK permanently or updating contact details at HMRC.

Our help toward Ukrainian migrants changed from providing help with applying for benefits regarding the Homes for Ukraine scheme to more complicated cases, as Ukrainians started

to leave their British hosts' households to start an independent life in the UK. We have dealt with quite a lot of housing issues mostly connected to lack of knowledge and understanding of British housing regulations between Ukrainian migrants. Our

wonderful Elina Whittington (pictured) assists in all cases where Ukrainians citizens are involved.

Beata Chyla (Polish speaker) joined us within last year and quickly became fully trained allowing more cases to be served in a professional manner.

Alena Kupcova – Slovakian and Czech language speaker, who joined the project in the very first months of our activity continuously supports us with translations and positive energy whenever it's needed.



# Help is here – Pomoc jest tutaj

Alicja Zon (Polish and English speaker) as a student joins the project whenever her busy university schedule allows.

After Brexit we have observed fewer cases connected to EU Settled Status applications, but more demands and questions concerning the process of applying for workers visas.



Consequently, both Joanna Zon and Marcin Proc, our project workers, started a training course provided by Derbyshire Law Centre to become qualified immigration advisors. This should enable them to provide complex help in the changing reality following Brexit.

## Issue Origins

Other districts **216**

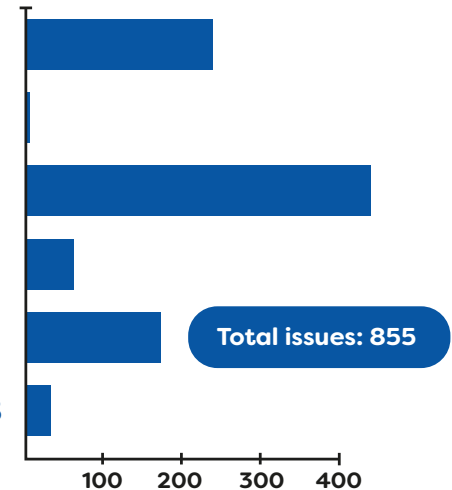
Amber Valley **3**

Bolsover **399**

Chesterfield **54**

Mansfield **155**

North East Derbyshire **28**



# Help is here – Pomoc jest tutaj

## Financial Awards October 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 – September 30<sup>th</sup> 2023

Lead Issue	Arrears paid	Benefit	Compensation	Debt written off	Grant	Other
Carer's allowance	£4,970.00	£67.25	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Child benefit	£3,888.95	£174.15	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Council tax reduction	£1,154.75	£65.34	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Derbyshire Discretionary Fund	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,935.00	£0.00
Discretionary Housing Payment	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£64.00	£0.00
Employment and Support Allowance	£5,176.60	£400.60	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Housing benefit	£7,297.71	£516.26	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Other	£6,706.12	£1,264.00	£0.00	£45,220.95	£1,143.00	£33,312.29
Pension credit	£8,239.73	£421.09	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Personal Independence Payment	£62,004.32	£2,661.59	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£7,535.36
State Pension	£5,217.62	£216.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Statutory Maternity Pay	£5,480.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Statutory Sick Pay	£2,051.19	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Universal credit	£41,500.59	£11,152.25	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Total awards</b>	<b>£153,687.58</b>	<b>£16,938.53</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£45,220.95</b>	<b>£3,142.00</b>	<b>£40,847.65</b>

**To everyone at Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres,**  
I just wanted to say thank you for the tireless work you do and have done for me and many many others. You make an enormous difference. Thank you very much.

You really are something else! I can never thank you enough for all you have done for me.

Thank you very much for encouraging me to claim for Attendance Allowance. I had a letter today telling me I am entitled, and the DWP are going to pay me £68.10 every week. They have already paid £569.15 into my bank. So thank you - I love the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centre!

Just a note to show appreciation for the very professional work you have undertaken for me. I wish you all the very best. I am so very grateful. I will put you on my Rockstar VIP list!

I just wanted to thank DUWC and in particular John who helped me with a claim for Carers Allowance, and Ben who helped me complete the application form for a Blue Badge. Without their help I could not have done it. I did not understand what

# 40 Years of the Derbyshire Unem

## Pre-1983

1981 sees the first March for Jobs since the 1930s. Arrangements are made by Chesterfield TUC and Local Authorities to involve the marchers. Afterwards, Chesterfield TUC set about to plan the next steps. The first Centre is established by Iain Barber, Bill Mitchell (DUWC), Frank Toop and other leading activists. GMB Union offers a space for volunteers, and the work begins.



## 1983

Discussions begin with CBI Bill Flanagan and the Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC) to establish a staffed Centre in Chesterfield. The Magpower Services Commission funds the staffing of the Centre under the Community Programme (CP) initiative. The first building, specific to the DUWC, is established in a CBI Portakabin in Shepley Road, Chesterfield. Gordon Smith, former consultant at Markham Engineering, is the first Co-ordinator. In January, the newly formed Joint Advisory Committee for the Unemployed, GMB quickly sets new standards and brings new skills, particularly in Welfare Rights Advice and Representation. Marian Brooks and Doug Heeringan are employees alongside Gordon.

## 1984

Tony Benn is elected as Chesterfield's MP in March. The Derbyshire Area Jobs (the National Women's Strike). DUWC builds its reputation for advice work as unemployment increases.



## 1985

In January 1985, the Joint Advisory Committee appoints 26 year old Colin Hamilton as Co-ordinator. In June, DUWC moves into 54, St. Margaret's. Marian Brooks is reappointed a year after having to leave her post. Colin and Marian, alongside Caroline Horsley and Elaine Todd, establish 'Outreach' bases in Duckmanton and Mutton Moor. Marian carries on building the reputation of DUWC's advice and representation work.



## 1986

DUWC receives so many enquiries from North Derbyshire that North East Derbyshire District Council (NEDEC) and Derbyshire County Council (DCC) are approached to contribute. Colin Hamilton joins with other LWCs to form National Unemployed Workers' Forum. 1985 January commemorative march comes through Dorefield to Chesterfield.



## 1987

As DUWC expands and demand for advice increases, funding is a constant issue. An independent source of income is required for campaigning to continue and develop. A new initiative based on a model pioneered on Manchester and backed by the TUC to attract funding from workers to assist Unemployed Centres is launched early in the year for AET (DFFA). Former union convener John Wright is head up Derbyshire DFFA.



## 1988

NEDEC are now funding DUWC, and DCC offers offices are established in Clay Cross and Humberwood. DUWC continues to rely on an outstanding team of volunteers. The first Assistant Co-ordinator of DUWC, Marian Brooks, dies at the age of 36.



## 1996

After DUWC lobbying efforts, local politicians sign the Declaration Against Involuntary Unemployment.



## 1997

DUWC lead successful campaign to keep the Chesterfield Tribunal Suite open.



## 1998

DWP propose to close Dorefield and Edlington Jobcentres with no consultation. A community campaign is launched by DUWC. Jobcentres are closed. Hundreds of people contact DUWC with hardship benefit problems following the 'All Work Test'. Claimants who are on trial for being sick or disabled.



## 1999

Gordon Smith retires from work as an Assistant Co-ordinator. Workers at Penrith Engineering are locked out of their workplace by the employer having abandoned. ISA claimant that the workers would not receive benefits over Christmas and New Year. DUWC takes up their case, and, after intense lobbying, the DWP make provision for extra statutory payments so that redundant workers would not lose out over the festive period. After the fact the law is changed.



## 2000

Blazers of Clay Cross, now owned by French Conglomerate, Gabilan, announce the plan to shut the three sites of closure while admitting the company will be profit. Andy Benn MP takes up the fight and asks DLUWC for help with the campaign.



## 2001

DUWC publish research carried out into the Government's 'New Deal' programme.



## 2002

Cliff Terry Kendall serves as Chair and Cliff Paul Buckley from Affinity takes over his opening message is one of 'We are quality' DUWC campaigns for a Bill of Rights for claimants and Jobcentre workers in a bid to bring dignity and respect to the benefits system.



## 2010

Employment Support Allowance causes massive disruption and as a result DUWC is overwhelmed by enquiries. DUWC takes for people affected by the ISA Work Capability Assessments to London to see the Minister but he pulls out of the meeting.



## 2011

DUWC activist Barry Johnson continues to be instrumental along with Iain Barber and Bill Mitchell in establishing DUWC. Volunteer Andrew Barker writes 'Diary of a Jobseeker'. Her on-line diary soon attracts thousands of readers from all over the world.



## 2012

DUWC's 'Bring out of Poverty' campaign continues its momentum, introduces its own magazine and launches a website which generates international interest. DUWC actively supports the campaign to save the Wemyss Factories.



## 2013

Foodbanks see a dramatic increase in users and see new communities across Derbyshire. DUWC represents at G20 Summit, while the Max your Money campaign continues across Derbyshire.



## 2014

DUWC finally has a home made from bricks and mortar. DUWC TUC, Derbyshire Law Centre and LNUKS move into 11, Thorne Hill East in Chesterfield Town Hall. DUWC plays a central role in establishing a Welfare Charter calling on the Government to bring social security and dignity to benefit recipients.



## 2015

Benefit sanctions continue to be a major issue within the community, and DUWC supports and represents those affected.



## 2016

'Unemployed Hero' walks the tightrope of benefit sanctions and job applications for a Bill of Rights for claimants and Jobcentre workers. Benefits sanctions continue to have a negative impact on claimants. Agencies and zero hours contracts cause problems for workers across the County.





# Employed Workers' Centres



the forms were asking for, and at first reading I thought it did not apply to me – just how wrong can you be. My sincere, grateful thanks go to John, Ben, and all at DUWC. We need people like you.

Thank you for your help. I got my letter for Attendance Allowance a few weeks ago and have been awarded it, at the highest level. I am very grateful for all of your help with this.

Thank you for all of your help with filling in my form for PIP. I found all of your staff friendly, approachable and very knowledgeable in explaining in a way that was clear to understand. I would not have been able to fill in the form without your help and would never have got the right result. I hope that you will be able to help people like me for a long time to come.

Thank you so much for all your help in completing my daughter's PIP form and at the tribunal. Winning the appeal at tribunal has taken a massive strain off. The PIP awarded will really help us. It would have been so difficult to navigate the system without you.

1989



Gordon Smith is appointed Assistant Co-ordinator. Annette Barrows, employed as Campaigns and Public Affairs, is appointed as Campaigns and Public Affairs. DUWC introduces Employment Training helpline as more unemployed workers are coerced into unpaid work.

1990



Roel Marshall, formerly the vicar of Goldthorpe, takes over as Derbyshire Office Fundraiser. In June, Roel Marshall produces the first edition of monthly 'Solidarity Bulletin'. DUWC helps produce 'HELPING YOU BACK TO WORK? YOUR SURVIVAL GUIDE'.

1991



Regional March for Jobs from Chesterfield to Leeds. Marchers from North Derbyshire and South Yorkshire march to Leeds. Derbyshire, Barnsley and Wakefield, ending with a rally in Leeds.

1992



A delegation of Indian Government Ministers and Trade Unions visit DUWC in September. North Derbyshire Health Authority appoints a Community Health Worker to be based in the Centre. Pit closures continue to bite in the region.

1993



With the grant aid support of Amber Valley Borough Council and Bolsover District Council, the name Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres is officially adopted. Official opening of high top office in Arleston by Bill Banks of the Transport and General Workers Union. DUWC conducts a survey of training schemes and job vacancies in the region.

1994



Death of veteran campaigner Bob. Bob Barker, one of the founding members of DUWC, dies aged 84. He made a tremendous contribution to the labour and trade union movement, and was a strong force behind the DUWC.

1995



DUWC organises, with other East Midlands Centres, the March for Jobs from Derby to Sheffield under the banner 'Jobs not JAG'. DUWC moves into March 19 from Parkview Row in S19 1NR. New outreach include Eckington and Killamarsh.

2003



With the support of the Scawley Neighbourhood Management Project DUWC produces a report giving the Unemployed person's view of the 'Barriers to Employment'. Amber Valley funds funding completely to Centres, but advice is still provided in Arleston, Sowerthorpe and Healey thanks to the Town and Parish Councils.

2004



DUWC celebrates a success after heading up a campaign to save the Medical Examination Centres in Chesterfield and Derby. The Medical Examination Centre in where claimants are assessed with regard to their claims.

2005



DUWC highlights the scandal of the DUW-making claimants use ODA5 numbers to make new claims. These numbers, as well as being costly, are also used to identify the number of claimants on the ODA5 register.

2006



'In God We Trust' Tributes were paid to Gordon Smith, who sadly dies this year. He was the first Co-ordinator of DUWC.

2007



DUWC heads up the campaign to keep the Belton Jobcentre open. DUWC launches a 'Migrant Workers Project' starting with a successful open day in S19 1NR aimed at migrant workers.

2008



DUWC receives over £1.59 million for Derbyshire people in October staff and volunteers join with thousands on First Child Poverty March in London. Workers at Coats Vulleis in Rugeley are told their factory is closing with the loss of 450 jobs.

2009



DUWC Chair Paul Buckley dies. Buckley is buried in January aged 83. Graham Baines, leader of NEDCC, agrees to take over as Chair. DUWC receives over £1.59 million for Derbyshire people in October staff and volunteers join with thousands on First Child Poverty March in London. Workers at Coats Vulleis in Rugeley are told their factory is closing with the loss of 450 jobs.

2017



DUWC conducts research into Agency Work and Zero Hours Contracts, along with Sheffield Hallam and Salford Universities. The recommendations from the survey include the banning of zero hours contracts and the abolition of sanctions. Universal Credit is rolled out in North East Derbyshire.

2018



Volunteers investigate Universal Credit (UC) claimants ending Chesterfield jobs for a survey into its impacts. Over half had a negative view of the new benefit, and over a quarter had trouble claiming it online. DUWC uses this report to lobby politicians to scrap UC.

2019



Relocation of the Shirebrook office from 44/46 Parkview Row to the nearby Jobcentre office takes place. DUWC makes successful bid to Liberty Community Fund for Advice project for migrants 'Help is Here'.

2020



As the COVID-19 Pandemic impacts on communities, DUWC produces a guide for those facing Redundancy. DUWC initiates support for local people throughout the pandemic through telephone support and through e-opening outreach with safe to do so.

2021



DUWC lobbies to cancel the proposed £20 per week cut to Universal Credit. Families from Chesterfield go to Brighton for huge 'Cancel the Cut' Sand Art installation.

2022



DUWC develops a new life size Snakes and Ladders game for the cost of living crisis. The idea is taken up all over the country.

2023



DUWC reports outreach in NE Derbyshire following support from the Henry Smith Charity. DUWC uses equipment of those using our services to launch our campaign against the Spring Budget.

Guide to claiming Benefits and Credits following Redundancy

## Your Voice, Your Rights

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**The mural in our Chesterfield office (Page 16), lays bare the fact that there is no justice without a struggle! Although our campaigns are many and varied, our overriding mission has been to push for full employment with quality jobs and decent pay as well as a dignified life for those unable to join the labour market. Work or Full Maintenance is how it was expressed by the National Unemployed Workers Movement in the 1920s and the 1930s. The language and environment may be different today but the sentiments are the same.**

For many, hard work has never been a route out of poverty and that is certainly true today with in work poverty being the norm for those in precarious and low paid employment. The numbers drawn into this situation are increasing as living standards fall and public sector workers find it even more difficult to make ends meet.

DUWC wants to see people back in work. However, for those with health conditions and disabilities, if their skill level is not of a quality to make them easily employable. The labour market is a harsh place to venture. Increasingly the squeeze has been put on, to force people to take any work on offer with the threat of withdrawal or the turning down of benefits claims. Time and time again, these policies have been pursued by all governments over the last 40 years and they have never worked. Study after study, including those commissioned by the government itself, have concluded that such policies drive people off benefits but not into work. Poverty and destitution is increased and more people are pushed further from the labour market with worsening physical and mental ill health.



## Your Voice, Your Rights

In 2023, with the biggest cost of living crisis in decades DUWC had to respond. We were asked and informed by our user feedback study to lobby and campaign on the cost of living crisis and energy price hikes.

We decided to concentrate on the spring budget with our 'Message to you, Rishi' campaign adopted by Unite Community, spelling out the demands of those that use our services.



# Your Voice, Your Rights

## DUWC joins with Community Sector in opposing Railway Ticket Office Closures

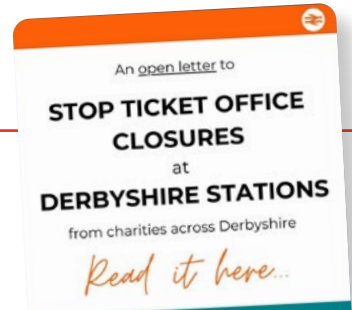
**We are petitioning the Rail Delivery Group and those bodies involved in the decision to re-consider the closure of ticket offices.**

We ask that the rail companies involved produce equality impact assessments that consider the closure of Derbyshire's ticket offices on all types of passengers across the region.

And finally, we ask that you outline and explain how you are going to discharge your duty of care for disabled and elderly users under the Equalities Act and provide reasonable adjustments at Derbyshire stations.



**The Centre also staged a flash mob of elderly, visually impaired and disabled people at the Chesterfield Railway Station**



# Your Voice, Your Rights

## Power to the People

**We are petitioning the Rail Delivery Group and those bodies involved in the decision to re-consider the closure of ticket offices.**

Following on from our campaign last winter, we are turning up the heat again, as we head towards another cold season. The cost of heating and light, a basic necessity of life, should not be denied to people because of affordability with spiralling costs. Those with prepayment meters (around 4 million people) can be cutting themselves off as they do not have the money to top up their meter when emergency credit has run out or can't be paid back. To stop cutting themselves off people have to live by rationing the use of heat and light to unacceptable levels.

DUWC will continue to highlight the issues that people raise in our offices and outreach venues.

**PEOPLE  
& PLANET  
BEFORE  
PROFITS**



**THE GRID  
IS FOR  
LIFE NOT  
GREED**



**NO MORE  
FUEL POVERTY**

## Around the area – Chesterfield



**Benefits advice provision is comprehensive and accessible in**

**Chesterfield. Our services can be found at our headquarters 1 Rose Hill East Chesterfield Town Hall, in Brimington, Hasland, Staveley, and Gussies Kitchen, serving the Boythorpe/Birdholme/Grangewood area.**

As well as consistent financial support from Chesterfield Borough Council, we receive grants from Brimington Parish Council and Grassland Hasmoor Futures.

Although our advisors work at all offices and outreaches the most likely faces you will see at Chesterfield are Andy Parkes, Katrina Hudson, Brigit Shipman, Keran Gladders, and Ian Christian.

### Case Study – Staveley

One morning in early February a man from Staveley rang our Chesterfield Office telling us he had been signposted to us by Staveley Jobcentre. He had a job interview that afternoon for a professional appointment but had no shirt and tie to wear for his job appointment. The interview had come up at short notice and his job coach had told him there was no time to give him any assistance and had recommended contacting us. He made a complaint about the Jobcentre's lack of practical assistance.

I asked him why he could not nip in to one of the Charity shops in Staveley and pick up a cheap shirt and tie. He said he only had 34p to his name as his Universal Credit would not reach his account until tomorrow. I asked him if he could ask neighbours or friends to help him. He told me he was agoraphobic, didn't know his neighbours and very rarely left his home and so that wasn't possible. I asked him how he was going to get to the interview and he said it was on Zoom, and the job would entail working from home in IT. The job paid a good salary and would suit him ideally. He was told we would ring him back if we could think of a solution. DUWC has developed a network of friends, supporters and past users of our service. Jeannie Robinson said she would drop him off a shirt and tie. Our supporter duly dropped off a shirt and tie from her partner's wardrobe. He was very grateful for our assistance. A few days later we spoke to him and he told us he had been offered the job pending references and DBS checks. He was over the moon and couldn't thank us enough for being there in his hour of need.

# Around the area – Chesterfield



**Andy Parkes, Welfare Rights Adviser**

Situated working alongside the Derbyshire Law Centre, TRUST/DAST and Links CVS in the ground floor east wing of the

town hall, our services are easily reached and boast a comfortable reception and waiting area.

In the Chesterfield HQ on Friday mornings, as well as our usual service we provide a dedicated advice session for East European migrants.

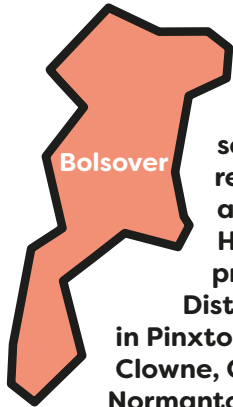
## Case Study – Chesterfield

A woman had epilepsy which was under treatment by her doctor and the hospital however the medication was not dealing with the effects of the condition and was seriously affecting her quality of life as she was bed bound for days, seriously fatigued, anxious all the time and felt extremely vulnerable needing constant supervision at all times as a fit could happen at any point. She filled out her own application for Personal Independence Payment and was awarded enhanced mobility but with no daily needs awarded, she had also completed a Mandatory Reconsideration which yielded no change in the award.

The woman came to our Chesterfield branch as she didn't know what to do and was overwhelmed. Our advisor assisted her through the process of completing an appeal to the independent tribunal service and in the appeal stated why she disagreed with no award for the daily living award. She was then contacted by the DWP prior to the independent tribunal and she was offered the award of standard daily living which it was understood she deserved.

She was extremely happy with this result and awarded a back dating of award.

## Around the area – Bolsover



**Our service in the Bolsover district is based in our Shirebrook office. From here we operate an advice service that is very well respected in the community. It also is the base for our 'Help is Here' Migrant workers advice project. Throughout the**

**District, we have our outreaches in Pinxton, New Houghton, Bolsover, Clowne, Creswell and out of South Normanton food bank in the Saint Michael and all Angels Church Hall.**

Advisers regularly operating in these offices are Andrew Parkes, John Power and Karen Seymour (picture adjacent), plus Ben Glover who works on the CISWO project (see page 12). Allison Jarvis and Shirley Pierson staff the reception at Shirebrook, giving a fantastic welcome to all who access our services. All the outreaches are incredibly busy and thanks goes to the Parish Councils who give their support.

### Case Study – Shirebrook (Help is Here)

'I'd like to share my experiences when I've met the DUWC. I started my journey with those great people over a year ago and can't imagine how my life would be without them. It started with problems with PIP and DUWC supported me because I have problems making any phone calls due to my depression, anxiety and panic attacks.

Finally, my PIP was awarded at a tribunal where I was represented by DUWC.

In the meantime, I had problems with my settled status and again DUWC helped me solve the problem with success. Because I'm in debt I have had other issues and was supported to successfully apply for the Severn Trent Big Difference Scheme.

Another positive thing is availability – to just be able to get advice and support when it is needed is very helpful. These are great people...they saved my life.'



## Around the area – Bolsover

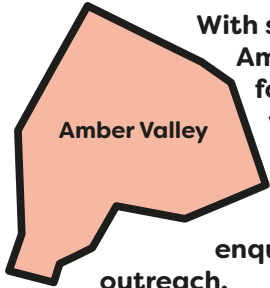
### Case Study – Bolsover

A woman attended DUWC's outreach at Bolsover library, having been encouraged to do so by a friend. She had scored zero points on their PIP assessment and was so disheartened by the process that she wanted to throw the paperwork away and not bother making any further applications in the future. DUWC's advisor reviewed the original application and convinced her there was enough evidence to suggest an appeal was viable and worthwhile DUWC's advisor submitted a mandatory reconsideration and, when this was rejected, completed an SSCS1 appeal form with the woman.

DUWC's advisor assisted the woman in requesting and gathering all relevant medical evidence for the appeal. Our advisor attended the tribunal with her and advocated on her behalf. The client was awarded Enhanced daily Living and Standard mobility, equating to a monthly award of £514.60. In addition, she was awarded an arrears payment of £7719.



# Around the area – Amber Valley



**With support forthcoming from the Amber Valley Borough Council following the May elections, we are again able to offer an enhanced service throughout the Borough. Our main office in Alfreton is inundated with enquiries as is our Somercotes outreach.**



With great help from our volunteer Colin Bennett we are building a reputation in Belper and in Heanor. John Jarvis (pictured) was helping at the Alfreton Foodbank supporting our project with Trussell Trust until his retirement. This

position will be filled shortly, and our service will continue to grow with fantastic support from Alfreton Town council, Heanor and Loscoe Town Council, Belper Town Council, and Somercotes Parish Council.

## Case Study – Amber Valley

A foodbank client had been signposted to our advisor as returning week on week for several months. He was in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) with a Universal Credit (UC) top up.

In February 2023, the ESA the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) stopped his ESA but failed to inform him why. He had repeatedly raised this with his work coach and was assured that all was in order and was receiving his proper payment.

Our advisor contacted the DWP on his behalf for an explanation. They related that he had not been sending them the relevant Fit Notes. Our advisor enquired of the client and he remained adamant that he had taken them to the Job Centre.

A further telephone conversation with UC confirmed that they had received the FN's. They added that they would not automatically notify the ESA.

Our advisor advised him that he should contact his GP for copies of the FN's and take them into the Jobcentre, and request that they be directed towards his ESA claim. Shortly afterwards his ESA was recommenced and arrears from February were paid.

## Around the area – Amber Valley

### Case Study – Belper

A DUWC advisor learned that a social acquaintance had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and was clearly starting to struggle with some physical actions. He suggested that the man should attend our Belper outreach to discuss the personal care difficulties his health conditions are causing. As is often the case, the client was down-playing his inability to complete personal care tasks safely and reliably. Seeking advice led to a successful claim for Attendance Allowance of £68.10 per week. This will help the man meet some of the extra costs of disability and pay for some aids, appliances and domestic adaptations. We also assisted the man to apply for a disabled parking Blue Badge.

Attendance Allowance is not means-tested and is paid if an applicant, who must be over state pension age and not already receiving

any other disability benefit, has a need for care and attention to safely look after themselves. Only difficulties around a claimant's person are relevant, such as getting out of bed, washing, using the toilet and any incontinence, dressing, eating, taking medication, moving around in the home and ability to stay safe with regard to any mental health conditions. It is based upon needs, rather than care and attention being provided. Cooking, shopping, cleaning and gardening are excluded as they are not about a claimant's person and could be completed in their absence.

For those in receipt of Pension Credit (a means-tested benefit for those over state pension) and living alone, receiving Attendance Allowance will possibly increase their Pension Credit too.

# Around the area – North East Derbyshire



**The May elections saw a change of administration at the District Council and our funding restored! With the help of the Henry Smith charity, we were able to reopen our outreach offices at Grassmoor, North Wingfield, and Clay Cross. Eckington Parish Council also returned to support DUWC with grant aid, and all these offices are busy with enquiries and could be opened longer if we had the funding.**

Brigit Shipman (pictured left), Keran Gladders and Katrina Hudson (pictured right) have been the main advisers staffing these outreach venues. Of course many North East Derbyshire residents, access our services in Staveley, Chesterfield and Alfreton. We are grateful for the tremendous support from supportive parish councils across the district.



## Case Study – Clay Cross

A woman attended our outreach in Clay Cross with a Personal Independence Payment renewal form, which our advisor helped her to complete. While completing the form, our advisor identified that the woman was not in receipt of Severe Disability Premium (SDP) payment, as she should have been, and helped her to complete an IS10 form. The woman had never heard of, or been informed about, the SDP.

This resulted in a back payment of SDP of £5,740, plus an extra weekly SDP payment of £69.50 secured for the long-term future, as well as a successful renewal of their PIP award.

## Around the area – North East Derbyshire

### Case Study – Grassmoor

A man came in to our offices in Grassmoor to enquire whether his Housing Benefit and Council tax reductions calculations were correct. He had reached State Pension age and wanted to know why he had to pay more rent and Council Tax. The man was also unsure about the amount of his State Retirement Pension.

Our advisor rang the pension service to find out how much his pension would be. The adviser told me that his pension would be £168.91 per week. However, this was to be reduced as he is paying back an overpayment, which would be taken at £56.30 - a third of his State Retirement Pension. Our advisor rang Debt management to find out if this amount could be reduced, as this would cause extreme financial hardship. An offer of £12.75 per week

was negotiated by our advisor.

After talking further to the man, the person informed our advisor that his partner was in ill health and was also over State Pension age. Our advisor identified that the partner should claim for Attendance Allowance.

DUWC helped him to make a successful application which increased the couple's income by £227.39 per week, giving him access to Pension Credit, extra housing and Council Tax benefit, as well as the Attendance allowance award.

It also became apparent that he had housing problems: the property being in a state of severe disrepair and other issues with the property owner. Our advisor then signposted the couple to the Derbyshire Law Centre for help with this.

# User Feedback

**In September we hold our annual user feedback month to ensure that the high standards we have set for ourselves over the years are being maintained. The Feedback we have received from across our venues has been very positive. 175 people completed the survey.**

## Waiting times

- 0-5 mins: 108 people
- 5-15 mins: 44 people
- 15-30 mins: 13 people
- 30- 60 mins: 7 people
- Over 1 hour: 3 people

175 people responded that they would use our service again – **a 100% positive response rate.**

175 responded that they would recommend our service to family or friends – **a 100% success rate.**

## Ways of hearing about DUWC

Each individual was asked how they had heard of DUWC

- Family / Friends: 85 people
- Referral from another service, including Jobcentre: 43 people

- Social Media: 31 people
- Leaflet: 3 people
- Signage: 5 people
- Trade Union: 1 people
- Other: 7 people

## How users felt about the service

Each individual was asked how they felt about the service we provided them:

- Very Happy: 163 people
- Satisfied: 12 people
- Dissatisfied: 0 people
- Very Unhappy: 0 people

## Issues that users felt the DUWC should organise campaigns around

The vast majority indicated energy bills, food prices and cost of living. Problems with PIP Medicals and Assessments were highlighted plus an array of benefit issues including their complexity and low rates. This information will guide our lobbying and campaigning activities into the new year.



# Where to get advice

## **Chesterfield & North East Derbyshire**

1 Rose Hill East,  
Chesterfield S40 1NU  
Tel:01246 231441  
Email: info@duwc.org.uk  
Monday – Friday 9.30am – 1.00pm

## **Bolsover District**

44 Patchwork Row, Shirebrook  
NG20 8AL Tel: 01623 748161  
Monday, Tues, Weds  
9am – 11.30am and 1pm – 4pm  
Thursday, Friday  
9am – 11.30am

## **Brimington**

Community Centre, High Street  
Monday 9.00am – 12noon

## **Hasland**

Hasland Hub, The Working Men's Club,  
Hampton St  
Wednesday 1.00pm – 3.30pm

## **Staveley**

Staveley Library, Hall Lane  
Monday and Thursday  
9.30am – 12noon

## **North Wingfield**

Community Resource Centre,  
Whiteleas Ave  
Tuesday 1.00am – 3:30pm

## **Grassmoor**

Community Centre, New Street  
Friday 9.00pm – 11.30pm

## **Clay Cross**

Clay Cross Social Centre, Market  
Street  
Monday 10.00pm – 1.00pm

## **Bolsover**

Bolsover Library, Church Street  
Tuesday 9.30am – 12.00am

## **Clowne**

Community Centre, Recreation Close,  
Wednesday 1.00pm – 3.30pm

## **Creswell**

Limestone House, Elmton Road  
Thursday 1.00pm – 3.30pm

## **Eckington**

Business Centre, Market Street  
Thursday 1.00pm – 3.30pm

## **New Houghton**

Community Hub, Rotherham Rd  
Thursday 10.00am – 2.00pm

## **Pinxton**

Village Hall, Kirkstead Road  
Monday 9.00am – 11.30am

## **Amber Valley**

Suite 4, Alfreton House, High Street  
Tel: 01773 832237  
Tuesday and Wednesday  
9.00am–12noon  
1.00pm–4.00pm

## **Heanor**

Heanor Town Hall, Buxton Room  
Thursday 9.00am – 11:30am

## **Somercotes**

Parish Hall, Nottingham Road  
Monday 1.30pm – 4.00pm

## **Belper**

Strutts Centre, Derby Road  
Thursday 1.00pm – 3.30pm

Check [www.duwc.org.uk](http://www.duwc.org.uk) for updates!

# Trustees 2022/2023

**The Trustees would like to thank all those who have given freely their time and talents throughout the year in pursuit of the aims and objectives of the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres.**

- Cllr. Graham Baxter
- Ian Rutledge
- Hilary Cave
- Cllr. Mary Kenny
- Nicolo Ferrera
- Elaine Tidd
- Cllr. Amanda Sarjeant
- Christine Smith
- Sarah Roy
- Angela Webster
- Cllr. Mary Dooley
- Nikki Tugby
- Joe Knight
- Andrew King
- Paul Hardy
- Cllr. Steve Marshall-Clarke

## Centre Staff 2023

Colin Hampton	Co-ordinator
Matt Hunt	Assistant Co-ordinator
Andy Parkes	Welfare Rights Advisor
Katrina Hudson	Welfare Rights Advisor
Tim Wilkinson	Welfare Rights Advisor
John Power	Money Sorted Advisor
Karen Seymour	Welfare Rights Advisor
Brigit Shipman	Welfare Rights Advisor
Jon Jarvis	Welfare Rights Advisor
Keran Gladders	Welfare Rights Advisor
Joanna Zon	Co-ordinator, 'Help is Here' Project
Marcin Proc	Advisor, 'Help is Here' Project

**Thanks** to all our funders, our Trustees, our OFFA Contributors, and all our supporters.

