Citizens Advice North Lancashire
Summary of debt work in 2022

Debt is a key part of the work that we do at Citizens Advice North Lancashire. Many clients come to us about something else, and then in the course of our discussions with them we establish that they need help with debt.

Our team has a number of specialist debt advisers who are trained in advance debt work and regulated by the FCA and the Institute of Money Advisers. We are a Breathing Space intermediary.

We are able to support clients with all sorts of different issues regarding debt from an initial debt assessment, to establish what's going on, to Debt Relief Orders, individual voluntary arrangements (IVAs), Bankruptcy and negotiating with creditors. We also assist clients with maximising their incomes by ensuring they are claiming everything they are entitled to and by challenging the DWP if necessary.

January - December 2022
The summary below provides a snapshot of the cases we saw in 2022.

In the year 2022 the top 5 issues recorded, in decreasing order of the number of issues and clients, were:

1. Debt (with 2590 issues: 550 clients)
2. Utilities and Communications (157 issues: 172 clients)
3. Financial Services and Capability (145 issues: 80 clients)
4. Benefits and Tax Credits (180 issues: 72 clients) and
5. Benefits Universal Credit (84 issues: 46 clients).

In 2022 (January - December) we helped clients write off **£595,988** of debt and we helped clients to reschedule debt worth **£212,889**. Across our service we helped clients to maximise their incomes by claiming **£2,514,011** in increased income they were eligible for.

1. Debt

Within the overall debt category:

- 52% of clients are aged 30-49, with a similar proportion of clients in each age group: 30-34 (15%), 35-39 (13%), 40-44 (12%) and 45-49 (12%).
- The majority of clients are female: 66% are female and 34% are male.
- 64% of clients marital status is single and 70% of households are classed as single. Of these 40% are in a single household and 30% are in a single household with dependent children.
- 44% are a private tenant and 22% are council/ALMO tenants.
- Only 10% of clients have an income less than £400, whereas for 58% of clients their income ranges from £1000 - £2499.
- The income category £1000 - £1300 accounts for 15%, £1301 - £1499 for 13%, £1500 - £1999 for 18% and £2000 - £2499 for 12%.
- 15% are employed for over 30 hours per week, 21% are unemployed and seeking paid employment and 29% are permanently sick/disabled.
- A long term health condition is the reason for disability for 57% of clients.
- The type of disability for 40% is mental health and is multiple impairments for 39%.

2. Debts: sub-categories
Below are selected details on sub-categories within the overall debt category:

2.1 Fuel Debts
- Of those with fuel debts 64% of clients are female, and 36% are male.
- 71% of clients are single.
- 48% are in a single household and 28% are in a single household with dependent children.
- 79% of clients are in rented accommodation. 42% are private tenants, 22% are council/ALMO tenants and 15% are housing association/RSL tenants.
- 23% are unemployed and seeking paid employment and 27% are permanently sick/disabled.
- 64% have a disability which is a long term health condition.
- 48% have a mental health disability and 33% have multiple impairments.
- 51% have an income over £1000. Income is between £1000 -£1300 for 18%, £1301 - £1499 for 16%, £1500 - £1999 for 19% and £2000 - £2499 for 16%.

2.2 Mortgage and Secured Loan arrears
- 24% are aged 50 -55.
- 65% are female.
- 41% are not disabled and have no long term health condition.
- 38% are single.
- 39% have an income of less than £1300 and 38% have an income of £1301 - £1499.

2.3 Council Tax Arrears
- 27% are a council or ALMO tenant and 45% are a private tenant.
- 8% are either housed through a job or business, staying with relatives or friends or in a hostel.
- The majority of those with Council Tax Arrears are aged between 30 - 49: (30 -34) 16%, (35-39) 14%, (40 -44) 16% and (45 -49) 15%.
- 65% are female.
- 70% are either disabled or have a long term health condition.
- 32% have multiple impairments and 44% a mental health disability.

2.4 Magistrate Courts - Fines and Comp Ord Arrears
- In this category 52% are male and 48% female.
- Most are in the 30 -34% group (24%) followed by the 40- 44 group (20%).
- The majority are either unemployed / seeking permanent employment (28%) or permanently sick or disabled (24%).

2.5 Bank and Building Society Overdrafts
- The majority are either unemployed / seeking permanent employment (25%) or permanently sick or disabled (29%).
- 8% are over 65.
- 74% are aged between 30 - 54 (30- 34), (35-39), 11%, (40-44), 17%, (45-49) 13%, (50-54) 13%.
- 19% are not disabled or have any long term health condition.

2.6 Credit, store and charge card debts
- Of those with credit, store and charge card debts, which is about 20% of debt clients, 95% are dealing with debt repayments.

- Of these 14% are couples with dependent children, 28% are a single person with dependent children and 41% are a single person.
- 72% are aged between 25 - 54, 62% are female and 38% male.
- 25% are permanently sick/disabled, 22% are unemployed/ seeking permanent employment and 23% are employed for over 30 hours per week.

2.7 Buy now, pay later (Klarna etc.)

- This category contains 2 clients dealing with debt repayments.

2.8 Breathing Space Moratorium

- 45% of those clients using the Breathing Space Moratorium are private tenants, 27% are council/ALMO tenants and 12% are buying their home (with a mortgage etc).
- 58% are single and 20% are married/cohabiting or in a civil partnership.
- 39% are permanently sick/disabled, 18% are unemployed/seeking paid employment and 11% are employed between 16 to 29 hours per week.
- 60% have a long term health condition. The type of disability for 51% of clients is recorded under mental health and 33% are recorded under multiple impairments.
- 31% are not disabled / have no long term health condition.