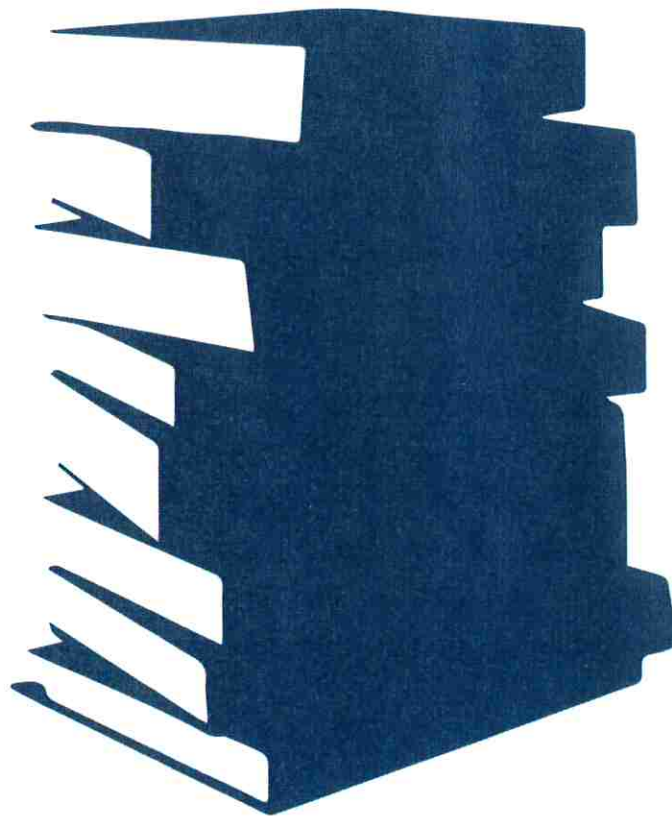


Impact Report

Broughton & Milton Keynes

Parish Council

Community Outreach Project
April 2018 – March 2019



**Broughton &
Milton Keynes**
PARISH COUNCIL

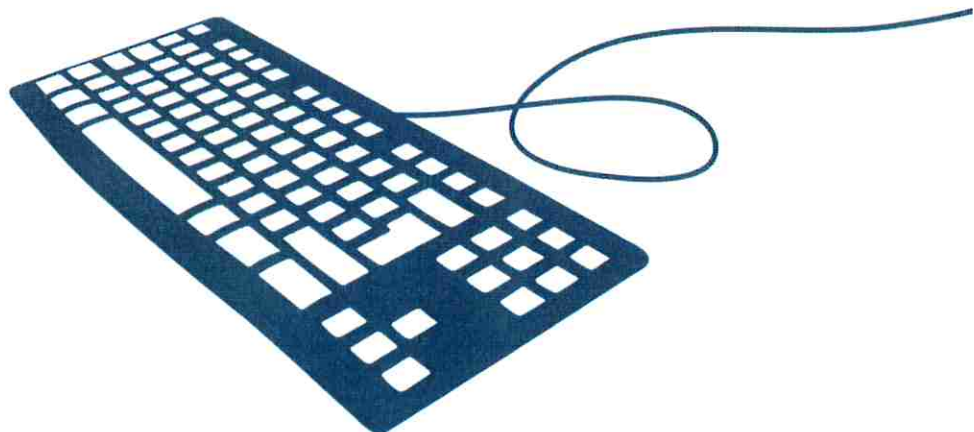


**citizens
advice**

**Milton
Keynes**

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Client Profile



Between April 2018 and March 2019 we've helped **83** people from the Broughton and Milton Keynes parish area to resolve and address **250** separate legal, money and personal problems.

By virtue of the fact that the number of problems is higher than the number of individual clients, it stands to reason that some people have needed to use the service on more than one occasion and over a prolonged period of time.

This service is funded by an annual grant from Broughton and Milton Keynes Parish Council

Outreach Details

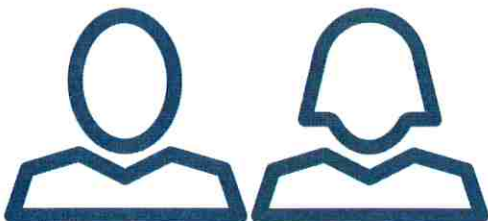
Held at the Parish Council Office:
27 Atlas Way, Oakgrove,
Milton Keynes,
MK10 9SG

Adviser - **Hannah Campbell** (Apr 2018 - Present)

Session - **9.30am - 12:30pm** alternate Tuesdays

The information on the following pages shows the main areas of enquiry we have given advice on and the level of support we have been able to provide to residents accessing the service.

Feedback from local residents continues to be very positive so far, and it is clear that the service has allowed us to reach people that hitherto had not contacted us before.



Gender



Housing

26% were living in Private Rented accommodation
9% were Owner Occupiers
48% were Council or Housing Association Tenants

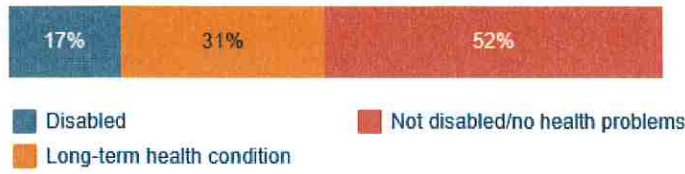


Family and Relationships

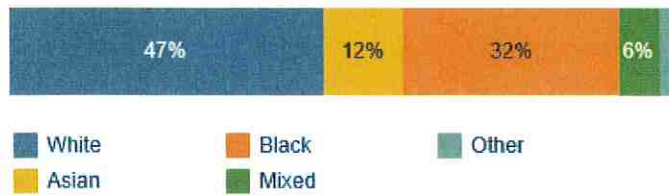
37% of people we saw were single and living alone
53% had at least one dependent child under the age of 16

Client Profile

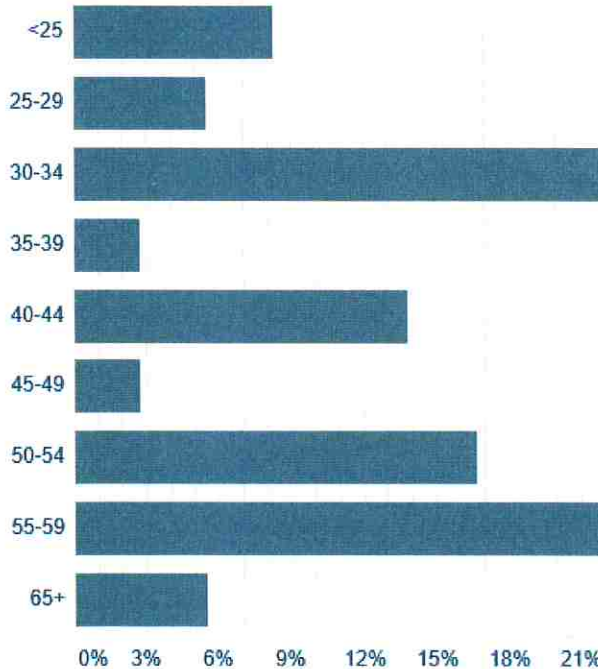
Health & Wellbeing



Ethnicity

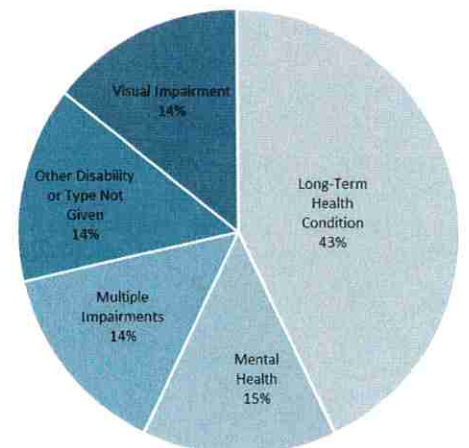


Age



Income Profile

£1239 – Is the **average, monthly household income** of clients accessing Citizens Advice at Broughton Parish Council

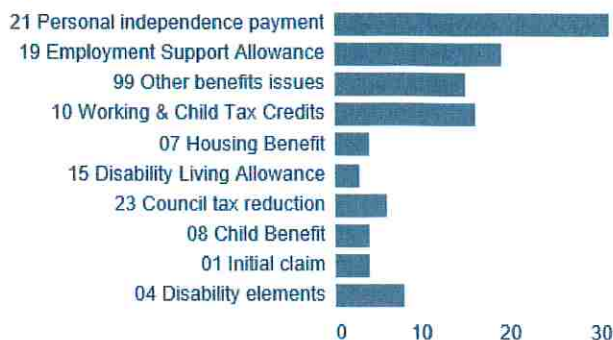


Casework and Enquiries

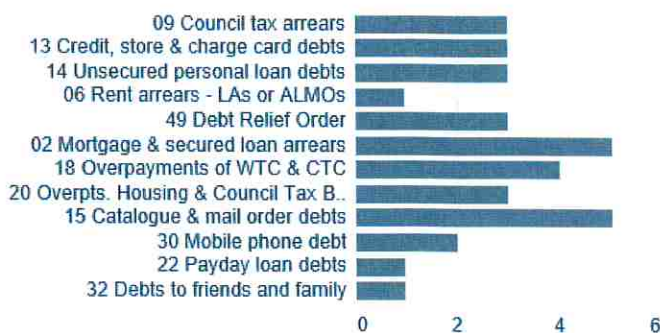
Issues

	Issues
Benefits & tax credits	108
Benefits Universal Credit	14
Debt	34
Discrimination	1
Education	2
Employment	10
Financial services & capability	2
Health & community care	21
Housing	28
Immigration & asylum	3
Legal	2
Other	1
Relationships & family	18
Tax	1
Travel & transport	3
Utilities & communications	2
Grand Total	250

Top benefit issues



Top debt issues



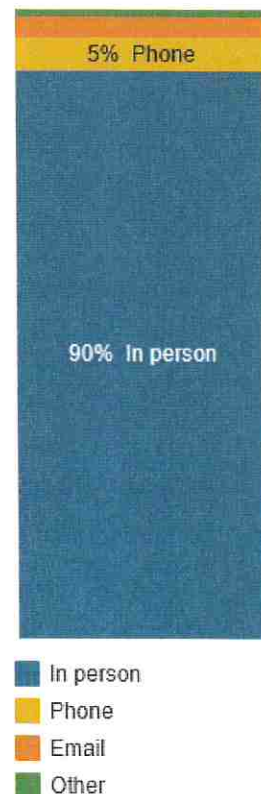
Channel

The way in which each problem is resolved depends on both the complexity of the issue and the capability of the service user. The vulnerability of many of our clients is an important factor in determining the level of support they may need.

All residents using the service will have had a short 'triage' interview with an advice worker to establish background details before being supported in one of following ways:

1. Initial Information (Quick Advice)
2. Full Appointment (Casework)
3. Specialist Advice (e.g. Pro Bono Solicitor)

The chart to the right shows the channel by which our adviser has supported local residents. The telephone, email and letter / admin contacts reflect follow up work done by our adviser post appointment.

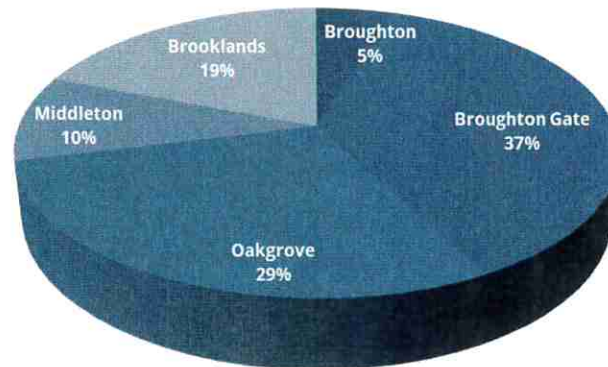


Location



People who used the service were drawn from across the following areas:

Clients by Estate Area



Outcomes



Confirmed Outcomes

April 2018 – March 2019

£ 27,451 claimed in welfare benefits

£ 9,425 in personal debt managed through repayment plans

£ 1,723 refunded to client/s through tenancy deposit schemes thanks to our help

Marcin's Story



Marcin came to Citizens Advice as he had had significant trouble dealing with his previous telephone provider (BT.)

Marcin swapped provider in 2016 to Sky but has received numerous summons from BT regarding payment for further charges after his final bill.

Marcin has tried to resolve the matter by telephone and has already sent BT copies of his bank statements showing final payment as well as his new Sky contracts.

Despite all of this, BT have not provided Marcin with any clear explanation for the bill and have passed the debt on to two different debt collection agencies thus far. The debt currently stands at **£662.72**.

Marcin has struggled to deal with the matter by himself due to mental health conditions, which have been worsened by the stress of dealing with BT.

Our caseworker wrote to BT disputing the charge, compiling all relevant paperwork and documents to support this. We also wrote to the debt collection agency to request a hold while the matter is being disputed.

Two months after submitting the appeal, Marcin returned to see us at the office in Oakgrove - BT had not yet responded to the letter or made any attempt to contact him. The debt collection agency confirmed that they would suspend further action and when contacted by our caseworker advised that they had had no further instructions from BT in relation to the debt.

Marcin was given a third appointment at the beginning of 2019 to assist him in taking the matter to the communications ombudsman. We supported Marcin to submit his evidence and he eventually received word that the ombudsman had ruled in his favour – he was awarded a small amount of compensation and was no longer liable for the debt.

Patricia's Story



Patricia has been employed by a firm that distributes car parts cross the UK. She has been employed there since November 2017. Initially, Patricia was a driver but told our adviser that she was later promoted to the position of Driver Coordinator 9 months later.

Patricia signed her new contract in July 2018. The role was subject to a six-month probation period which finished in January 2019.

Patricia told us she had no discussions during her probationary period about her performance and no meeting at the end of the six months to discuss next steps with her line manager. Patricia told us she had been called in to see the Operations Manager and informed that she was being dismissed and escorted from the premises. Patricia was given no dismissal letter and no reason for her dismissal.

Shortly after being dismissed, Patricia telephoned the HR team member responsible for her depot to request a dismissal letter with reasons. The person she spoke to wasn't aware that the Patricia had been dismissed and said that she would look into the situation. Patricia later received an email attachment of the dismissal letter which stated that the Patricia was 'not suitable' for the role and does not demonstrate the right attitude towards the company.

The letter offered Patricia an opportunity to appeal against the dismissal within 7 working days, but she had no idea that there were any issues with her performance and was concerned because the manager had only been working with her for one month so possibly did not have a full understanding of her performance. She asked our adviser for help determining the next steps.

Our Adviser noted that Patricia had just under two years' service with the company which meant that her rights were very limited. The employer has the right to dismiss under that time limit. however, our Adviser suggested that Patricia make a formal appeal and wrote out a detailed letter requesting this.

Our Adviser also requested copies of the company's disciplinary procedures for Patricia so that it would be easier to determine whether her employer had followed the process properly.

We advised Patricia to take a work colleague or trade union representative with her for support and to ensure that she gets a copy of the outcome of the appeal hearing in writing.

Jasvir's Story



Jasvir lives alone, is unemployed, and suffers with Depression. He came to see our caseworker at the Library following the death of his elder brother Sukvinder, who lived in Swindon. Jasvir explained that Sukvinder had died suddenly and without making a will, he had no children and had divorced his ex-wife over 10 years ago.

Jasvir is Sukvinder's only surviving relative and so he wanted to understand what he needed to do in order to put Sukvinder's affairs in order.

Our caseworker explained that when a person dies without leaving a valid will, their property (the estate) must be shared out according to certain rules. These are called the rules of intestacy. A person who dies without leaving a will is called an intestate person.

Only married or civil partners and some other close relatives can inherit under the rules of intestacy.

Our adviser told Jasvir that parents, brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews of the intestate person may inherit under the rules of intestacy but that this will depend on a number of circumstances such as:

- whether there is a surviving married or civil partner
- Whether there are children, grandchildren or great grandchildren.
- in the case of nephews and nieces, whether the parent directly related to the person who has died is also dead
- The amount of the estate.

Jasvir explained that he had a small amount of savings but could not afford a Solicitor. After giving him some general advice on the rules of intestacy, our adviser arranged for Jasvir to attend a free 30-minute consultation with a Wills and Probate solicitor. These appointments take place at the main office in Central Milton Keynes and are for clients who are on low income. The meeting with the solicitor took place a fortnight after meeting with our adviser at the Library.

At the time of preparing this report, Jasvir told us that he had found both appointments very useful and that he had felt confident after receiving the advice, to apply for a **'grant of representation'** in order to become the administrator of his brother's estate.

Outcome:

- Client assisted to access 'Pro Bono' Specialist Advice