

July 2022

Dear Supporter,

Welcome to our latest newsletter and the first of the new financial year.

We have been exceptionally busy over the last few months. As we all know, prices are rising very fast, and the cost of living is beginning to have a major impact on the lives of many of our clients. In addition to that, we are seeing an increase in clients seeking our services on housing and employment issues. We represented one client in court at the end of June, to try to stay their eviction, and achieved a favourable result.

Each week, our trained advisers help many clients to fill out their application forms for PIP and many other benefits they are entitled to. Many of them are computer illiterate, or have no access to a computer, and are daunted by the prospect of trying to complete forms online. It is not widely understood that so many vulnerable people in our society suffer due to digital exclusion.

Q1 Statistics:

Between April and the end of June our volunteers have provided **1,304** hours and we have recorded **1,537** contacts with clients in this quarter.

We have secured a financial gain of **£350,010** for our clients, through helping them claim for benefits and grants that they are entitled to and helping them manage and, where we can, write off their debts.

Welfare Benefit Appeals and Reconsiderations

We continue to support our clients in challenging benefit decisions. First, this involves working with the client to draft a detailed request to the DWP that they reconsider their decision, highlighting the areas where we and the client believe that they have not given due regard to the impact of health issues on the client's day to day life and mobility. If, having reconsidered, the DWP still do not award the benefit at the level we believe the client qualifies for, we offer to assist the client if they wish to appeal to an independent Tribunal, and explain the process to them. If they wish us to do, we will prepare the client's case and represent the client at the hearing. Our consistent success rate of over 90% at Tribunal Hearings demonstrates our expertise in this field.

Annual General Meeting

Everyone is welcome at our Annual General Meeting, which will be on Thursday 13 October at 7:30pm in the Matfield Pavilion. Please put the date and time in your diaries. Formal notice and further information will follow nearer the time.

We would like to thank all our trustees, volunteer advisers, supporters, funders, referral partners and clients for promoting, supporting, and using our service throughout the last quarter.

We look forward to your continued support so that we can maintain our service to the residents of Paddock Wood and surrounding areas.

Yours faithfully

Paddock Wood Community Advice Centre

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