



**Fylde**

# **Annual Report 2022/23**

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## Overview

This report concentrates, for statistical purposes, on the year April 2022/March 2023. However, it also includes some information on developments since April 2023, along with our plans for the future.

At present we operate an Adviceline Service and telephone advice from our main office in Kirkham between 9am and 4pm Mon-Fri. We offer face to face appointments on Tuesdays Wednesdays and Thursdays at the Kirkham office.

We also provide outreach services at the Town Hall in St Annes , a drop-in service on Wednesdays and appointments on Fridays. Appointments can be booked through our Adviceline telephone service.

### Our Aims:

To provide the best possible advice to the citizens of Fylde in order that they can deal with the problems they face.

To train, encourage and enable local people to volunteer to provide advice to fellow citizens.

To enable and assist volunteers currently out of work to acquire skills and gain confidence so that they can return to the workplace.

Each Citizens Advice Office is separately registered with the Financial Conduct Authority. Our Financial Registration Number is **617610**.

## Staffing

Our core staff at the end of this reporting period was: Natalie Traynor (previously Reeves), Chief Executive Officer and Lisa Bolton, Advice Service Manager - along with Andrea Clay, Session Supervisor and Oleg Melehovs Administrator.

Susie McCormick left her position of Volunteers Manager in December 2022 and Lisa Bolton returned to take on the position of Advice Service Manager, amalgamating the roles of Volunteers Manager and Projects Manager.

We have 20 Advice volunteers, including 9 trained Adviceline Assessors, 7 trained Full Advisors and 4 advice volunteers in training. We also have volunteers performing admin duties, computer maintenance and IT upgrades, as well as acting as Trustees.

We are continuing to prioritise the recruitment of volunteers to fully cover Adviceline and to allow staff development to the Full Adviser role if desired.

The pandemic caused significant problems with the training of volunteers due to trainees being unable to sit with trained assessors to shadow them. There was a significant drop in Volunteers during COVID, however, this is now improving and we have initiated a recruitment drive to increase our numbers.

We offer training courses for our paid staff and volunteers using Citizens Advice Training modules and training courses provided through external sources such as Shelter and Lancashire County Council. We also develop in-house courses and work with other Citizens Advice Offices to provide training specific to our needs.

Citizens Advice Fylde uses the national Performance Quality Framework process to ensure quality of advice, customer satisfaction, and effective leadership. A sample of cases is audited each month. We will continue to be visited 3 yearly for Management/Finance compliance in order to maintain our AQS (Advice Quality Standard) Mark of 'General Help with Casework'. Our last Leadership Self-Assessment in January 2022 resulted in confirmation that we were exceeding the required Citizens Advice standard in all aspects of governance, management and planning.

### Generalist Service Report - April 2022 – March 2023

Performance Reports are provided as an appendix at the end of this report.

To access our service, people of Fylde have a number of options.

- Telephone, using our Adviceline number, with voicemail facility.
- Email our Advice email address,
- Through the website,
- Complete a form and put it in the box in our foyer.

All of these access points are treated equally. Once contact is made the client is contacted and either provided with information or if the client requires more in-depth help then an appointment will be made for them, either for telephone advice or face to face if required.

We have face to face appointments in the office. These appointments are in high demand and we are utilising our resources as efficiently as possible.

We also provide a drop-in service at St Annes Town Hall every Wednesday morning, as well as a full appointment service on Friday mornings. This allows us to cater for clients who have difficulties travelling to Kirkham.

In this reporting period we helped **1194** clients with **2884** separate issues.

The government-backed **Pensionwise** service was also delivered by phone in this period. Clients who are over 50 and have personal or workplace pensions can receive free guidance on their options as they plan for retirement.

We continue to explore ways of increasing our levels of service to the whole of the Fylde. We have updated and simplified our website, enabling the public to find us easily and to access general Citizens Advice information through a link to [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk). Links are also provided from here to other useful websites.

## Partnership Working

We are a referral agent for **Fylde Foodbank** who share the lower floor of our building and operate from the Kirkham premises on a Monday and a Friday.

We attend the **Fylde Cost Of Living Focus Group** and provide statistics on Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefits to Fylde Council as requested. We work closely with Fylde Housing department, particularly with the housing and homelessness officers. We distribute the Household Support Fund on behalf of Fylde Council to people struggling with the Cost of Living Crisis.

We attend **MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)** as a representative for Fylde.

We have held talks with AFC Fylde Community Foundation to look for potential group working.

We also continue to develop a good community network throughout Fylde which will benefit clients through increased service awareness and referral procedures.

## Specialist Services

### **Rosemary**

This project began in January 2017 and was initially funded by The Allen Lane Foundation for one year. It is currently funded by National Lottery for one day per week.

It involves the specialist training and provision of a Domestic Violence worker for Fylde. Andrea Clay is the project worker; she is qualified as an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). Andrea also participates in the Fylde and Wyre Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

Andrea initiated 118 interventions in the reporting period.

### **At Home**

This project was previously funded by United Utilities for three years for the provision of a home visiting service for one day a week. It is currently funded by Citizens Advice Cost of Living Fund.

The project provide advice to those unable to visit the office or St Annes, while at the same time helping to combat social isolation. Lucinda Ball is the project worker.

Lucinda has initiated 239 interventions in the reporting period. This includes benefit forms, debt, Blue Badge applications as well as benefit appeals. Referrals into the project has to be restricted to ensure those in need receive the home visiting service first due to the demand for the service.

### **Fylde Money**

Fylde Money is a debt and budgeting project set up in 2022 in response to the Cost of Living Crisis. It offers debt and budgeting options to clients. The Project Worker is Sharon Christian.

Sharon has initiated 268 interventions in the reporting period. This is mainly casework as she directs people through the debt process.

### **Household Support Fund**

Since December 2021 Citizens Advice Fylde has been distributing the Household Support Fund on behalf of Fylde Council to financially assist clients who are vulnerable due the Cost of Living Crisis .

Citizens Advice Fylde provided financial assistance with energy and water debt and bills. In the reporting period we distributed over £250,000 of funds to those most in need. We offered a holistic approach giving debt, benefits and energy advice as well as financial assistance.

## Client Satisfaction

We are part of a National Citizens Advice Initiative called the Customer Experience Survey. We ask our clients if they are happy to be contacted by Citizens Advice directly to give feedback on the service they have received.

**The latest report shows that for the overall client experience of using our service, 84% thought the service had helped them find a way forward.**

89% had an overall positive experience and 90% of clients said that they would be likely or very likely to recommend our services to friends and family.

## Recruitment and Training

Recruitment remains a priority to fully staff Adviceline and to support those wishing to transfer from Adviceline to full Advice.

We do have a number of volunteers who come to us and work with us to help us but also to improve their skills. These volunteers have been very successful in subsequently gaining employment. As we come out of lockdown we are increasing our recruitment drive.

We are actively recruiting from minority groups in the area and have been successful in recruiting Ukrainian Refugees.

## Funding New Projects

We are constantly exploring avenues of funding; particularly concentrating on opportunities where deprivation does not need to be high and that would benefit our Fylde demographic. We continue to explore these opportunities both as an individual office and in partnership with other Citizens Advice offices throughout Lancashire. We are also speaking to SME's in the local area who are keen to support their local community.



## The Future

We have already initiated changes to improve the service to the people of Fylde. We will no longer be part of the National Adviceline service, rather we will have our own dedicated telephone Adviceline service for the people of Fylde. This will improve accessibility and call wait times.

We have employed an Adviceline Assessor to ensure calls are answered or clients called back in a timely manner.

In June 2023 we start a Macmillan Benefits Advice service, to ensure people who receive a cancer diagnosis have access to benefits and financial advice.

We also will employ a full time debt and budgeting adviser to ensure people suffering financial hardship, or in debt have the best advice in their options and a way forward.

In turn this will help with mental health issues associated with debt.

We will continue to work closely with Fylde Council and other voluntary agencies in Fylde to provide a holistic approach to our clients' issues. We will strive to source new funding and partnership working in order to meet demand. We will use the resources provided by our national membership of Citizens Advice to support our strategic planning for the future, drawing on regional networks in order to learn from good practice elsewhere, and participating in new initiatives if appropriate opportunities arise.

Citizens Advice Fylde is committed to continuous improvement of its practices and procedures in order to ensure provision of, and access to, its core services for all Fylde residents. This includes actively looking to increase our accessibility through our outreach provision.

## Contact Details



Adviceline 0808 278 7881



Website <https://www.citizensadvicefylde.org.uk>



Twitter @FyldeCAB



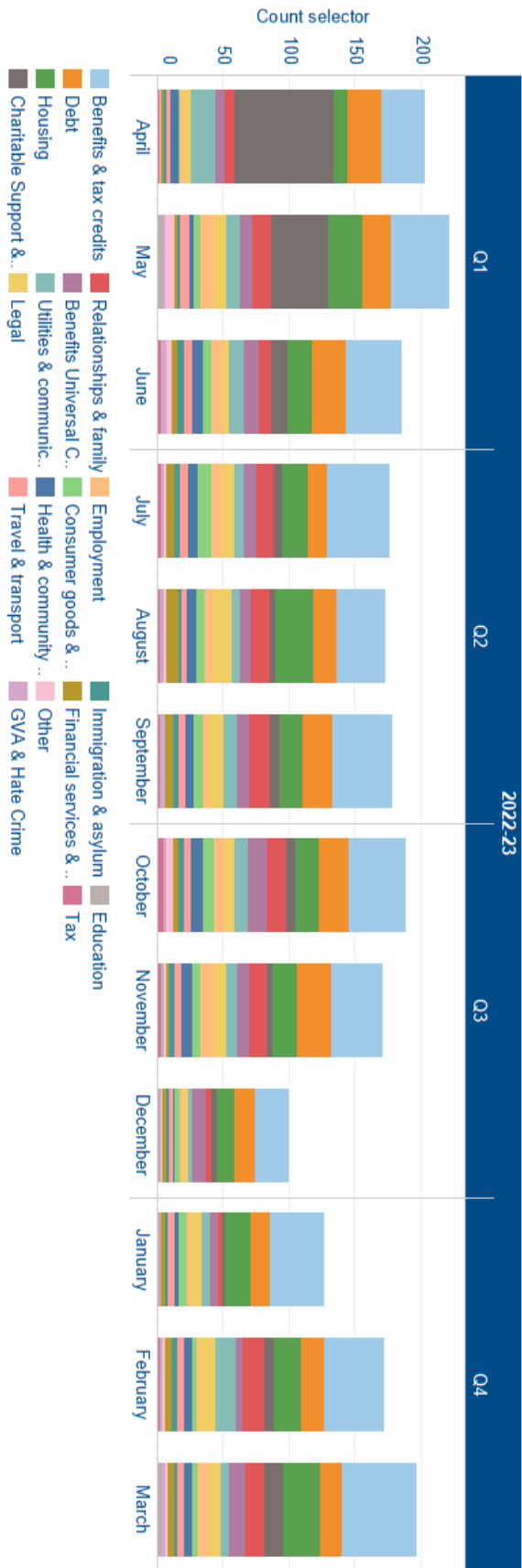
Facebook Citizens Advice Fylde



Email [Advice@fylde.cabnet.org.uk](mailto:Advice@fylde.cabnet.org.uk)

Graph of issues or clients with an issue

If showing clients the charts are stacked showing all client with each issue (not the total number of unique clients)



# Clients by Ward

01/04/2022 31/03/2023

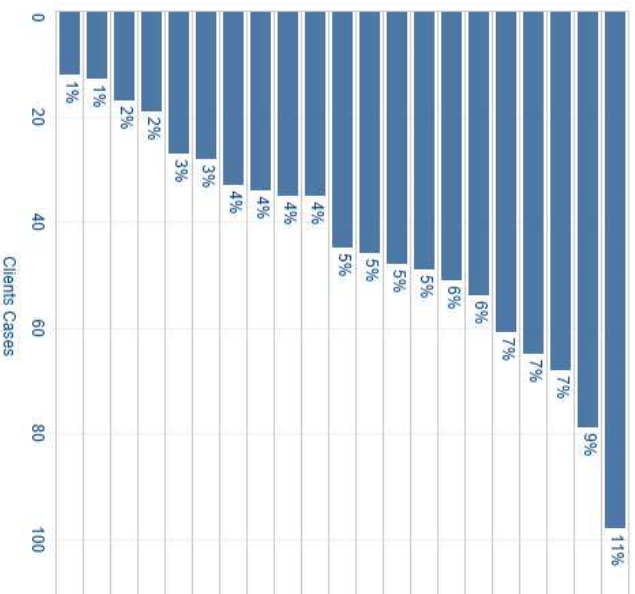


Clients (set minimum number to display)  
From 1

You can click on the data picker to set the minimum number of clients seen (this will filter out wards with lower numbers of clients and allow you to focus on the areas with the highest volumes)

## Ward

Local Authority Ward	Local Authority	
Warton and Westby	Fylde	98
Medlar-with-Westham	Fylde	79
Central	Fylde	68
Kirkham North	Fylde	65
Park	Fylde	61
Ashton	Fylde	54
Kirkham South	Fylde	51
Heyhouses	Fylde	49
St Leonards	Fylde	48
Kilnhouse	Fylde	46
Freckleton East	Fylde	45
Ansdell	Fylde	35
Fairhaven	Fylde	35
Clifton	Fylde	34
St Johns	Fylde	33
Newton and Treales	Fylde	28
Freckleton West	Fylde	27
Staining and Weeton	Fylde	19
Elswick and Little Eccleston	Fylde	17
Ribby-with-Wrea	Fylde	13
Singleton and Greenhalgh	Fylde	12



# Key Statistics

Fylde (member)

01/04/2022 - 31/03/2023



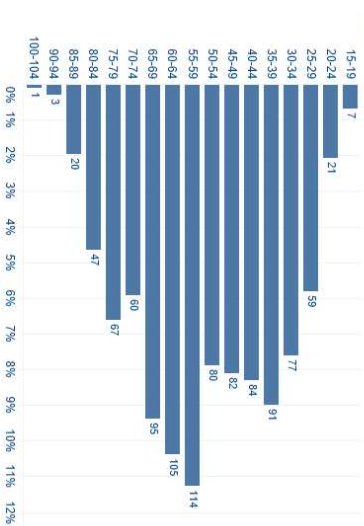
## Summary

Clients	1,194
Quick client contacts	216
Issues	2,884
Activities	4,670
Cases	1,182
<b>Outcomes</b>	
Income gain	£149,325
Re-imbursements, services, loans	£7,010
Debts written off	£33,558
Other	£3,960

## Issues

Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	788
Benefits Universal Credit	158
Charitable Support & Food Ban.	218
Consumer goods & services	106
Debt	351
Education	15
Employment	110
Financial services & capability	52
GVA & Hate Crime	31
Health & community care	88
Housing	333
Immigration & asylum	59
Legal	124
Other	38
Relationships & family	21
Tax	176
Travel & transport	13
Utilities & communications	157
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,884</b>

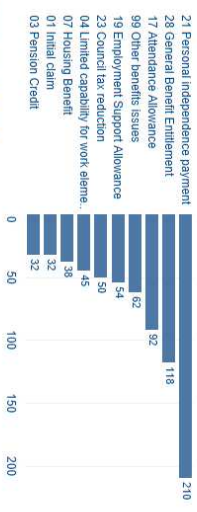
## Age



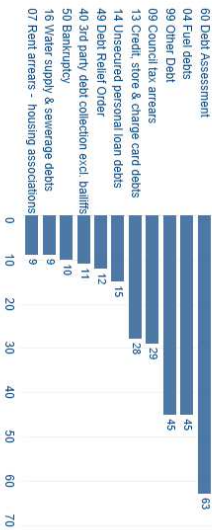
## Channel



## Top benefit issues



## Top debt issues



## Gender



## Disability / Long-term health



## Ethnicity

