



Report to Environment, Health and Housing Committee 2017

This report concentrates, for statistical purposes, on our work during the year April 2016/March 2017. However, it also includes some information on developments since April 2017 along with our plans for the future.

Citizens Advice Fylde has been serving the Fylde community since 1968 at present we operate from our main office in Kirkham between 9am and 4pm Mon-Fri. We take a mixture of appointments, drop-ins and telephone enquiries through our new Adviceline system. Our St Annes Outreach has now moved to the Town Hall and is open on a Tuesday for appointments and on a Wednesday for drop-ins.

We are the only Hate Crime Reporting Centre in Fylde and our new Moneyplan project began in August 2016.



Fylde

On the 10th of March 2017 Citizens Advice Fylde held Strategic Planning day where we reviewed our previous plans for the year and set new objectives. We concentrated on Volunteering – how to attract volunteers and to ensure they stay with us for as long as possible. Finding volunteers is becoming an increasing difficult exercise for all charities as people work longer and/or take on caring responsibilities.

Our Vision Statement reads:

**To be recognized as the prime source of help and advice
serving the Fylde community.**

Our Mission Statement reads:

**To empower people in the Fylde to work through their
problems and to challenge injustice.**

Staffing

Our core staff are: Mrs K Cook, Chief Executive Officer - 27 hrs pw and Mrs L Pope, Operations Manager - 37 hrs pw, along with Ms N Reeves, Session Supervisor/ Advisor (Outreach)/Volunteer Development/IDVA - 28 hrs pw

We have 30 Advice volunteers, including 10 trained Adviceline Assessors, 14 trained Full Advisors and 6 advice volunteers in training. We also have volunteers performing admin duties, computer maintenance and IT upgrades.

We are continuing to prioritise the recruitment of staff to fully cover Adviceline and to allow staff development to the Full Advisor role if desired. Subsequently we would have sufficient Full Advisors to increase our outreach work. We are continuing to use a portion of our reserves to fund a temporary one day a week post (Volunteer Development) in order to boost staffing numbers as quickly as possible. We will also continue to arrange a number of 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 will also continue to develop in-house courses and work with other CABs to provide training specific to our needs. Our Advisors are kept up to date on all subject areas through our Advisernet website constantly maintained and updated by Citizens Advice nationally. We also receive information bulletins provided by Citizens Advice nationally, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Council for Voluntary Services and many other sources.

Citizens Advice Fylde is now using Continuous Audit process to ensure quality of Advice. A sample of cases are audited each month. We feel this is much better in order to monitor our performance as we develop our telephone Adviceline and generally expand our services. 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'. Each Citizens Advice Office is separately registered with the Financial Conduct Authority. Our Financial Registration Number is **617610**.

Our Advice Service at Citizens Advice Fylde

Adviceline 0300 330 1166

www.fyldecab.org.uk

twitter @FyldeCAB

facebook Citizens Advice Fylde

Since September 2007 we have been open five days a week, 35 hours per week. Our core opening times are Mon- Fri 9am – 4pm.

We have up to eight appointment slots available each day. When capacity allows our drop-in clients can be seen immediately or, if not, a suitable appointment made for them. We can also provide telephone or email advice when requested.

Our Telephone Adviceline Service has been up and running since the beginning of November 2015 and operates between 10am and 4pm each day. We run this service in a 'hub' with other local CAB Offices (Wyre, South Ribble, Leyland and Chorley) and our clients will reach an Adviceline Assessor when they call Adviceline. If they are a Fylde Client and a Fylde Assessor is free they will be directed to us but if no-one is free in Fylde then one of our partners will answer. They will be initially be assisted using the Citizens Advice Public Website; If the client requires more in-depth help then an appointment will be made for them at their local Office.

We have been working with Mr William Fisher at Fylde Borough Council to move our St Annes outreach to the Town Hall's new customer service area. In April 2017 our Tuesday full appointment outreach moved into the Town Hall where staff have been most helpful. This was followed in May 2017 by a new drop-in outreach also in the Town Hall. Initial indications show that this will be well used however we will monitor the outreaches to ensure that we have the correct delivery model in place. Appointments for the Outreach are made through the Kirkham main office.

In August 2016 we began our new MoneyPlan project. Our team has been joined by a trained Financial Adviser from a local firm that has contacted Citizens Advice volunteering their services free of charge. He will be able to offer a free first interview, giving generic financial advice to our clients according to their specific situation. Appointments will be booked through us and the Adviser will use a room in our premises. Should the client require further help we will provide a list of financial advisers in the area and at that point they are advised that they are likely to be charged by whomever they choose to contact.

Although the 2014/15 Debt Management Pilot Projects have now finished, those CAB Offices that took part in the pilot can still refer clients to Stepchange Debt Charity (formerly CCCS) for a Debt Management Plan that is free to the client.

Earlier this year we began to roll out ASK training to our staff. This is a Citizens Advice Initiative training volunteers to ask specific questions to clients presenting with certain issues in order to ascertain whether domestic abuse may be a factor in their problem. If a problem is detected we have a specified path to follow in order to get the correct help for the client.

Partnership working

We continue to explore ways of increasing our levels of service to the whole of the Fylde. We continually update our website www.fyldecab.org.uk enabling the public to find us easily and to access general Citizens Advice information through a link to www.Citizensadvice.org.uk. Links are also provided from here to other useful websites. As well as the services we offer and projects that are running we also give details of any local or national campaigns are running and that we are supporting. Citizens Advice Fylde has a Facebook page and is on Twitter. Our new Adviceline service is a collaboration between us and West Lancashire, Wyre, Chorley and Leyland Offices

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 Homelessness Action group and provide statistics on Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefits to Fylde Borough Council as requested. We work closely with Fylde Housing department, particularly with the housing and homelessness officers.

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

We are a member and take an active role in Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Community Network (previously Fylde Together).

We are a partner in the Advice Network which is bringing together the former Advicelink partners and those that were working under the Transition Fund projects in Fylde and Wyre. A website has been developed for where to go for Advice throughout the Fylde with links to all our individual organisations.

Citizens Advice Fylde remains a Hate Crime Reporting Centre for the Fylde; working closely with Lancashire Police.

We remain involved with the Public and Patient Engagement Group for Fylde which is attended by representatives from the NHS, local CCG and other healthcare professionals.

The profile of Research and work within Citizens Advice is kept high by the publication of press reports and by the appearance on TV and radio of our chief executive Gillian Guy. We have a new Research and Campaigns co-ordinator Anne Gray, she continues to be involved on with reporting trends and issues to Citizens Advice nationally identified through our advice work and statistics. Our Trustees often also assist with this work. We take part in initiatives both locally and nationally. We continue to receive updates from Lancashire Police and Trading standards on a regular basis; keeping us updated on consumer issues, scams and frauds which may affect our clients.

We produce a regular newsletter that goes to all members of our Management Committee, all Fylde Borough Councilors and to our partner agencies.

New Projects

Rosemary – Funded by The Allen Lane Foundation for one year.

This project began in January and is for the specialist training and provision of a Domestic Violence worker for Fylde for one day a week and fits in well with the ASK training previously mentioned. Natalie Reeves is the project worker; she has recently qualified as an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). Some details are:

She is working with 14 Domestic violence cases covering a variety of genders and situations. Because three of her cases have been assessed as high risk of serious harm/homicide these cases have been referred to MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and she has presented to the conference.

Working for Citizens Advice has meant that our worker has access to up to date legal information and guidance on how to apply that knowledge. She has used this knowledge to assist clients to apply for necessary court orders including non-molestation and occupation orders.

She has a good relationship with Victim Support and the DEN (childrens IDVA) who have been in contact to ask for advice on legal issues such as occupation orders which they rarely use. We now have a Criminal Justice System secure email for communication with MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub).

We would very much like to expand our project to work more closely with other agencies to share knowledge and expertise (particularly how to apply for relevant court orders) for the benefit of Fylde residents.

At Home – Funded by United Utilities for three years

This project is for the provision of a Home visiting service for one day a week and also began in January. Robert Egford is the new project worker. Thirty Nine clients have so far been visited with many clients have required more than one visit due to on-going issues. The health and well-being of clients is greatly enhanced by the work done and it is a service we really hope to be able to continue. Part of the project is also for volunteers to be trained up to continue the work.

Advice Lancashire consortium bids

European Social Fund (Led by Selnet) Building Better Opportunities funding .

The current successful bid is for two streams of the: **Age of opportunity** and **Invest in youth**. We have received only a small amount of funding under these project streams as indices of deprivation were used to calculate the funding. However it will demonstrate that Advice Lancashire can work as a consortium which will be useful for future bids.

European Social Fund (Led by WEA) Building Better Opportunities funding .

The **Reach IT** bid is being co-ordinated by WEA rather than Selnet and we have just learnt that this bid has been successful. We will become a digital centre in Fylde and funding will be available for a few hours paid post to oversee the hub and possibly for training but not for equipment. The aim is to assist Fylde residents to become more digitally confident and there will be some short 'courses' for them to run through. We are about to start meetings to decide how the centre will work and what 'training' and digital assistance is to be given under the project which will begin in October 2017.

Customer Satisfaction

During Spring 2016 we decided to join a National Citizens Advice Initiative called the Customer Experience Survey. We are asking our clients if they are happy to be contacted by Citizens Advice directly to give feedback on the service they have received. The number of clients willing to take part in the short survey when contacted has, apparently, been variable but this was expected. However

the first Feedback for Fylde has come through from the Customer Experience Team. The figures are for the period April 2017 to June 2017:

For the overall client experience of using our service **83%** of clients felt it was positive or very positive.

For whether the clients problem was solved by using our service **67%** of clients said that it was. We would obviously like this to be higher but many problems are on- going and clients may still be using our service.

For whether they would recommend our service to family/friends **72%** of clients said that they would.

Our figures were perhaps lower than they might have been due to some comments regarding ease of access. Some clients would like a 24/7 service to fit around work etc. but this is not practicable at present.

Recruitment and Training

Recruitment remains a priority for us in order to fully staff Adviceline and to support those wishing to transfer from Adviceline to full Advice. To support this a portion of our reserves continues to be used to fund a one day a week Volunteer Development post. The numbers on Adviceline continue to gradually grow and some Adviceline volunteers are going on to train as full advisers. All Citizens Advice offices are finding it difficult to attract volunteers. We do have a number of volunteers who come to us through the DWP and work with us to help us but also to improve their skills. These volunteers have been very successful in subsequently gaining employment. We recently held a Strategic Planning day (April) concentrating on more targeted recruitment of volunteers and volunteer support there is a task and Finish group working on this at present.

The Citizens Advice redeveloped Training Scheme is now fully up and running and being used by all of our new Trainees.

Funding Bids

At present our office is preparing bids to continue the Rosemary DV project beyond the current one year. The Office is using a portion of its reserves to fund a one day a week supervision post in order to allow more management time to be focused on funding applications. We have received a donation of £2000 from the ESSA foundation to assist with Publicity. 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 through Advice Lancashire.

Statistics for the last full year 2016/17

Stats 2016/17

Enquiries	701	
Adviceline Gateways	1223	(done by Fylde)
Adviceline Gateways	472	(done by West Lancashire Hub)
Daysheets	463 *	

Total **2859** pieces of work done

Unique clients **1627** – obviously many of these clients require multiple appointments.

* NOTE

For clients that call in to the reception at our main office or at our Outreach in St Annes Town Hall and require a leaflet, telephone number, signposting to another organization or the brief use of our public computer a Day Sheet record (a simple count) is kept on our Client recording system. We began using this tool along with the introduction of Adviceline in November. We recorded **463** Clients on Day Sheets.

St Annes Outreach Wednesday Drop-in service (began End of April)

29 Clients have use the new drop in service and had a gateway interview. Some have used it more than once but will only be counted once. Some clients may have used the drop in to obtain a small amount of assistance – see * above and will be in the daysheet figure.

Client Full Enquiries and Gateways 2016/17

Each **Full Enquiry or Gateway Enquiry** is likely to generate several Advice Information Issues. Fylde **Advice Issue Codes (AIC)s** are:

Fylde AICs by Calendar

		Year	2016-17				
		Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
		Month					
AIC Part 1	AIC Part 2	AIC Part 3					
Benefits & tax credits	01 Discrimination		1	0	0	0	1
	02 Income Support		5	5	3	7	20
	03 Pension Credit		4	6	3	8	21
	05 Social Fund Loans-Budgeting		2	1	0	1	4
	07 Housing Benefit		22	19	18	27	86
	08 Child Benefit		2	7	2	8	19
	10 Working & Child Tax Credits		23	27	22	21	93
	11 Jobseekers Allowance		9	7	8	13	37
	12 National Insurance		0	1	1	1	3
	13 State Retirement Pension		3	4	2	2	11
	15 Disability Living Allowance		7	3	1	6	17
	17 Attendance Allowance		10	8	10	17	45
	18 Carers Allowance		7	4	3	11	25
	19 Employment Support Allowance		29	32	33	65	159
	20 Universal credit		2	2	4	8	16
	21 Personal independence payment		37	68	64	66	235

Benefits	22 Localised social welfare		1	1	2	0	4
	23 Council tax reduction		11	6	7	17	41
	27 Passported benefits		0	1	0	0	1
	99 Other benefits issues		42	47	30	28	147
	Not recorded/not applicable		9	23	38	41	111
			226	272	251	347	1096
Universal Credit			1	0	0	0	1
Consumer goods & services			51	40	46	44	181
Debt			103	88	99	137	427
Discrimination			16	7	6	19	48
Education			3	5	3	1	12
Employment			49	69	59	99	276
Financial services & capability			6	15	9	23	53
Health & community care			18	13	19	18	68
Housing			46	49	57	80	232
Immigration & asylum			5	7	6	10	28
Legal			37	34	30	53	154
Other			14	17	17	32	80
Relationships & family			73	77	73	80	303
Tax			16	4	11	7	38
Travel & transport			9	13	15	14	51
Utilities & communications			16	11	12	12	51
Column Total			689	721	713	976	3099

Advice Issues %'s 2016/17 Enquiries requiring some debt advice make up 14% of all enquiries raised and for Benefits it is 35% of enquiries. Employment is 9% , Housing 7% and Relationships and Family 10%. All of will usually require the client to visit more than once and will be time consuming issues.

For further Advice Trend information please see Appendix I
Information is currently only available for 2017/18 but from local experience trends remain the same this year so far.

Ward information for ALL enquiries in 2016/17

Fylde	Ansdell	20	*
	Ashton	31	*
	Central	50	*
	Clifton	16	*
	Elswick and Little Eccleston	12	
	Fairhaven	32	*
	Freckleton East	51	
	Freckleton West	35	
	Heyhouses	41	*
	Kilnhouse	29	*
	Kirkham North	77	
	Kirkham South	78	
	Medlar-with-Wesham	86	
	Newton and Treales	39	
	Park	31	*
	Ribby-with-Wrea	20	
	Singleton and Greenhalgh	10	
	St Johns	29	*
	St Leonards	28	*
	Staining and Weeton	8	
	Warton and Westby	77	
		799	

From April 2016 to March 2017 39% of clients contacting us came from wards in Lytham and St Annes.

From April – July 2017 the number of clients was slightly more at 40%.

Our Research and Campaigns work

Research and campaigns work is a dual aim of Citizens Advice. We believe that raising awareness of both national and local issues and identifying trends is key to a 'prevention rather than cure' approach benefitting clients and society as a whole

Citizens Advice Fylde reports any research and campaigns identified to Citizens Advice Nationally for use. The Chief Officer of Citizens Advice Nationally is Gillian

Guy as you will often see comments from her on behalf of Citizens Advice on social issues in national papers, on the news and in Parliament. Some of our current work includes:

Welfare

- [Fixing Universal Credit - Campaign](#)
- [Universal Credit](#)
- [Confusing HMRC letters](#)
- [Welfare reform and working people](#)
- [Our relationships with local Jobcentres](#)
- [View all](#)

Work

- [Income Security - Campaign](#)
- [Secure self-employment](#)

Housing

- [Settled and safe: a renter's right - Campaign](#)

Energy

- [Working with your energy network operator](#)
- [Prepayment meters and self-disconnection](#)

Debt and financial services

- [Understanding gambling-related harm](#)
- [Council Tax Protocol refresh - Campaign](#)
- [Access to basic bank accounts](#)
- [Improving the flow of information and intelligence](#)
- [The impact of debt: the experience of problem debt in the UK](#)
- [Debt and financial service issues in Wales](#)

Consumer

- [Scams Awareness Month 2017](#)

Telecoms

- [Dialling down debt - Campaign](#)


Post

- [Royal Mail price changes 2017 - Campaign](#)

Citizens Advice in Parliament

- [Latest Parliamentary briefings :](#)

Our briefings provide information for debates and give Parliamentarians regular updates on our policy work.

- [Briefing for the Westminster Hall debate on post office closures 25 April 2017](#) [ 150 kb]

Emergency Debate on PIP Regulations March 2017

- [Briefing for MPs on PIP regulations - March 2017](#) [ 240 kb]

Digital Economy Bill 2016/17

- [Briefing for the House of Lords Report Stage 22 February 2017](#) [ 120 kb]
- [Briefing for the House of Lords Second Reading 13 December 2016](#) [ 130 kb]

Renters Rights Bill 2016

- [Briefing for the Committee stage of the Renters Rights Bill](#) 

Our impact

Our impact on society can in part be measured by the following figures, however a price cannot be put on peace of mind and a feeling of well being that comes from knowing that your issues have been listened to and an action plan put in place for dealing with them.

Debts and Gains March 2017

Every year we do a 'debts and gains' snapshot for one month - March to give us an indication of the level of debt and benefit gain we are assisting with. In March this year the figures were as follows:

Total debts seen	£264,666.92
Total benefit gains	£139,731.92
Total grants received	£6,499.51
Total wages/pay	£1,511.00
Total Lump sum payments	£27,167.00
Total value of other services	£0.00
Total gains	£174,909.43

If we extrapolate these figures for the whole year then:

£3,716,003 of debt was dealt with.

£2,098,913 of benefits were 'gained' for our clients.

The rescheduling of debt and assisting people to claim the benefits they are entitled to will largely result in money going into the local economy which will obviously continue to bring benefit to Fylde.

Citizens Advice Fylde
Some Local Case Studies from the past year
(names changed)

Margaret

Margaret came to us when she was struggling and needed help in order to cope. She was suffering from breast cancer and her husband had recently been diagnosed with dementia. When she first contacted us we checked all of Margaret's benefits to ensure she was receiving all she was entitled to and she was put in contact with the Alzheimers Society and so was also then receiving support from them.

Subsequently Margaret's husband went into a nursing home which had implications for her benefits and she became very distressed when being pursued for a Disability Living Allowance overpayment. Dates and amounts were checked, Margaret's benefits were adjusted and the overpayment was dropped.

Sadly Margaret's husband then passed away and our advisor assisted with advice the pensions implications, what to do after a death and ensuring that Margaret's financial position was clear so that she had peace of mind going forward.

Our advisor has been working with the client for 18 months and is continuing to do so.

Susan

Susan was being 'stalked' and harassed by a man in her immediate neighbourhood who had an interest in her which was not returned. His behavior was very intimidating and threatening. Our Advisor took her through a safety planning interview, assisted her to make a statement to the police (gentleman was known to them) and also to make an application for housing so that she can be removed from the area. Once Susan is safe she would like us to assist her to make a complaint to the gentleman's employer.

Jennifer

Jennifer has been unable to work since 1991 due to severe migraines, epilepsy and endometriosis. She was assessed and put into the Work Related Activity group for Employment Support Allowance. Jennifer was distressed by this as she would be unable to take part in the activities required of her in this group and so came to us for assistance. Our Advisor contacted the DWP with Jennifer to request a mandatory reconsideration; a medical report was obtained and forwarded. Jennifer's original benefits were reinstated 4 weeks later.

The **Future**

Citizens Advice Fylde aims to continue to develop our Office and to adjust our ways of working, where appropriate, in order to meet the needs of all of Fylde's residents. We are committed to working closely with Fylde Borough Council and other voluntary agencies in Fylde to provide a holistic approach to our clients' issues. As you know Fylde has a very particular demographic and we must bear that in mind when deciding whether to adopt new Citizens Advice initiatives and when we develop new projects. We will strive to source new funding and partnership working in order to meet the demands of Fylde.

Our website is www.fyldecab.org.uk and we are also on facebook and twitter.

If anyone would like to contact me for a chat about what we do and/or about volunteering opportunities they would be very welcome to do so. I can be contacted on 01772 673014.

Kim Cook
Chief Executive Officer 2017

Supported by:

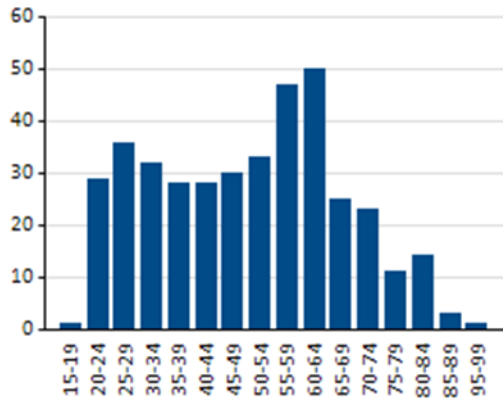


Advice Quality Standard

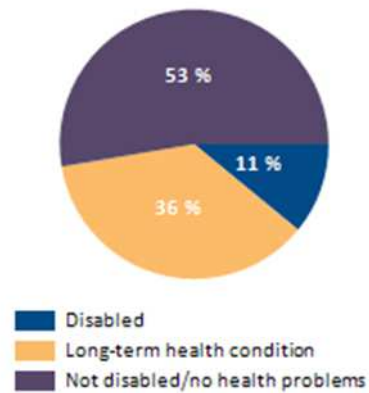
Appendix I

Q1 2016/17

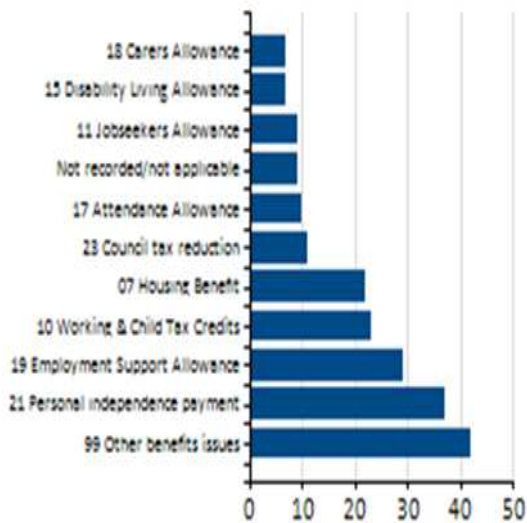
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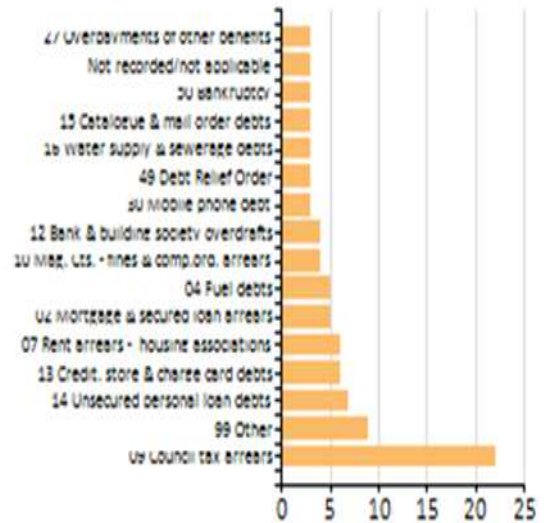
Disability/LTH



Top 10 Benefit Issues

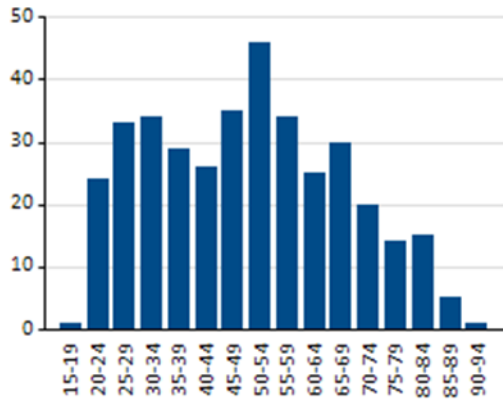


Top 10 Debt Issues

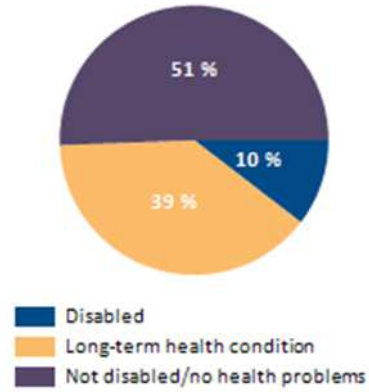


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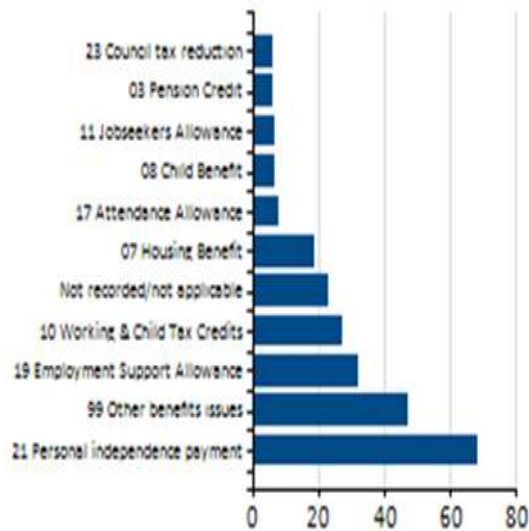
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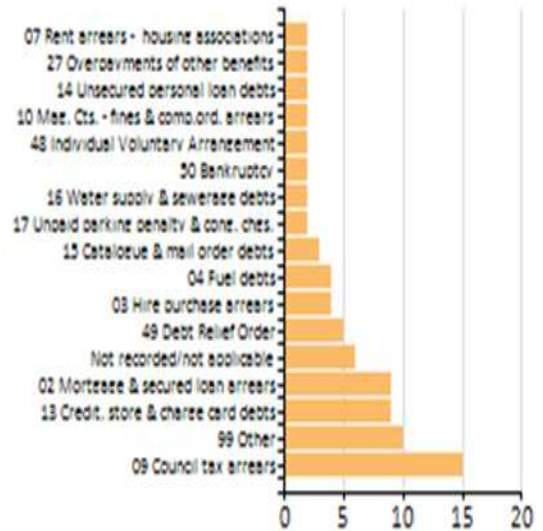
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Top 10 Benefit Issues

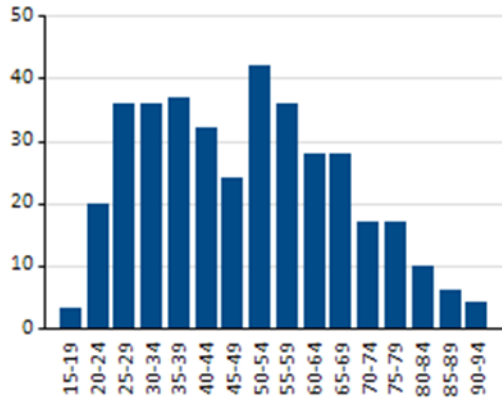


Top 10 Debt Issues

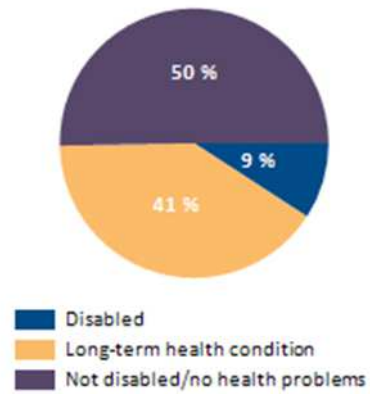


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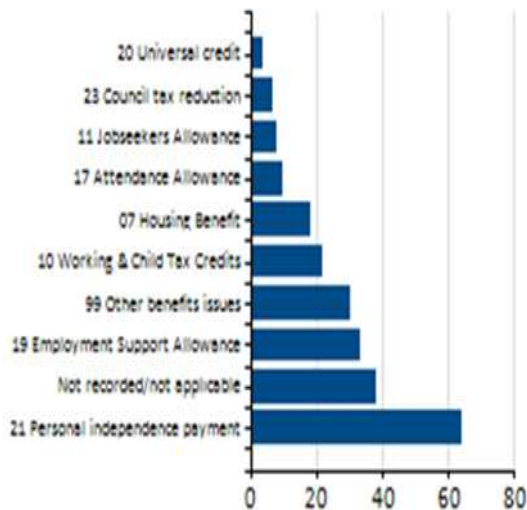
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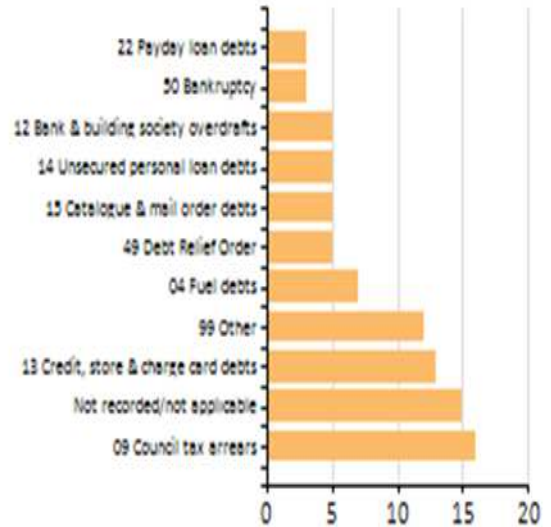
Disability/LTH



Top 10 Benefit Issues

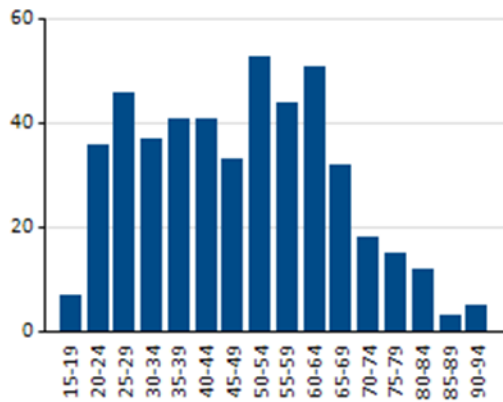


Top 10 Debt Issues

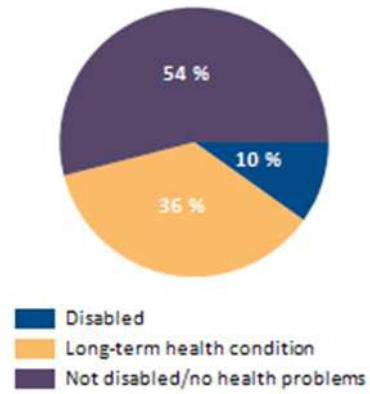


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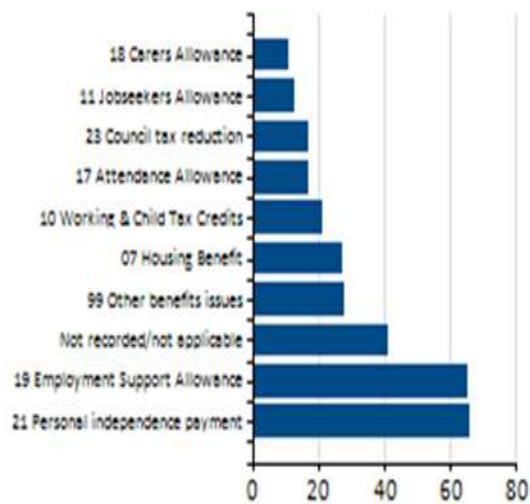
Age Range



Disability/LTH



Top 10 Benefit Issues



Top 10 Debt Issues

