



**citizens
advice**

Hartlepool

**Whoever you are, we provide
advice that empowers and
support that lasts.**

Annual Report, 2024/2025



As Chair of the Trustees, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this year's Annual Report. I'm proud to reflect on a transformative year for our organization; one defined by resilience, growth, and deepened community connection.

Against a backdrop of economic uncertainty and rising need, our incredible staff and volunteers have gone above and beyond to deliver high-quality, face-to-face advice and support to the people of Hartlepool. Their dedication has been nothing short of inspirational, helping thousands of local individuals and families navigate challenges with dignity, compassion, and practical solutions.

Whether working from our advice centre, out in the community, or through partnership initiatives, their impact is visible not only in outcomes, but in lives changed. It's this unwavering commitment to service that continues to shape our identity and strengthen trust within the town we're proud to call home.

I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to our team, my fellow trustees, partners, and supporters for making this work possible. Your drive, empathy, and determination continue to propel our mission forward in ways that spreadsheets cannot fully capture.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on innovation, inclusivity, and financial sustainability. The coming year offers new opportunities to expand our reach, deepen our roots, and reaffirm our role as a cornerstone of community resilience.



Last winter, a Hartlepool resident facing eviction with multiple debts and rising energy costs walked through our doors in crisis. Today, they're back on their feet, debt-free and financially secure. Their story is one of **4,989** clients we helped shape throughout 2024-2025 year.

Guided by our core values, our vision and mission inform every aspect of our work, driven by innovation, strategic foresight, and a steadfast commitment to improvement. The past year has been one of intentional growth and adaptation, set against a backdrop of challenges affecting both our clients and the wider community. These include mounting cost-of-living pressures, reductions in public sector spending, and ongoing economic and political instability.

It's truly gratifying to continue supporting the people of Hartlepool and beyond, proactively addressing individual needs before they escalate into crisis. Our mission remains clear: to resolve problems, reduce the impact on our clients' lives, and enhance their financial well-being.

This dedication is reflected in the significant outcomes we've achieved:

- **£5,282,427** total income gained for our clients
- **£693,412** of debt successfully written off
- Support provided to **4,989** clients, covering **7,293** cases and **15,576** individual issues

We remain steadfast in our commitment to being client-centric. Our priority is to deliver comprehensive information, advice, advocacy, and guidance - each carefully tailored to the unique circumstances of every individual we support. To meet evolving needs, we've maintained our service channels to include face-to-face consultations, home visits, and digital assistance via telephone and email.

General Manager's Report

Recognising the importance of accessibility, we undertook a complete website redesign, enabling secure online feedback and client referrals for the first time.

Our specialist teams continue to provide integrated 'wrap-around' support for our clients which include home visits for vulnerable individuals unable to attend our main office. This is an essential part of our plan to ensure we reach people in the ways that work best for them.

We're committed to the long-term sustainability of our services. Over the past year, our partnerships and community networks have flourished, strengthening our ability to deliver tailored support and extend our reach. Our coordinated work with the Local Authority and the DWP to maximise support for clients, whether accessing unclaimed Pension Credit or undergoing migration from legacy benefits to Universal Credit alongside the invaluable backing of the Local MP, reflects our commitment to co-designed, community-led service development.

Citizens Advice Hartlepool has much to be proud of. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has collaborated with us throughout the year. Our dedicated team has forged strong relationships and friendships that have been integral to our success, and we take immense satisfaction in knowing that every role within our organisation has made a meaningful difference during these challenging times.

Our specialist teams continue to focus on key issues including debt, energy, employment, and benefits. We closely monitor the evolving impact of food and fuel costs, and remain committed to strengthening support for families in the year ahead.

We are also determined to identify new sources of support and continue investing in our community's needs. To our funders and donors, your generosity allows us to direct resources where they matter most, helping people regain control of their lives.

Finally, to every volunteer, staff member, trustee, partner, and everyone connected to Citizens Advice Hartlepool: thank you. From warm greetings at reception to specialist home visits, your unwavering dedication makes our work possible and is sincerely appreciated.

Ross Brooks – General Manager



Our Public Value

- For every £1 invested:
- There is **£32.46** in wider economic and social benefits.

Total: £15,091,391

- At Citizens Advice Hartlepool, we never give advice in isolation.



Our Fiscal Value

- For every £1 invested:
- There is **£3.98** in savings to government and public services.

Total: £1,851,744

- Our integrated approach means every client receives wraparound support tailored to their full situation, not just the problem they walked in with.



Our Individual Value

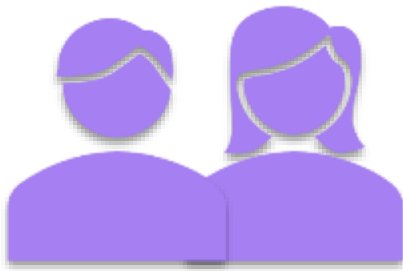
- For every £1 invested:
- There is **£18.88** in financial value to the people we help. (Specific outcomes to individuals).

Total: £8,776,868

- The people we help, our funders, government and the organisations we work with see the value we deliver and the impact we make.

How we Helped?

- During the year, we provided multi-channel delivery of advice and support via telephone, email and face to face.

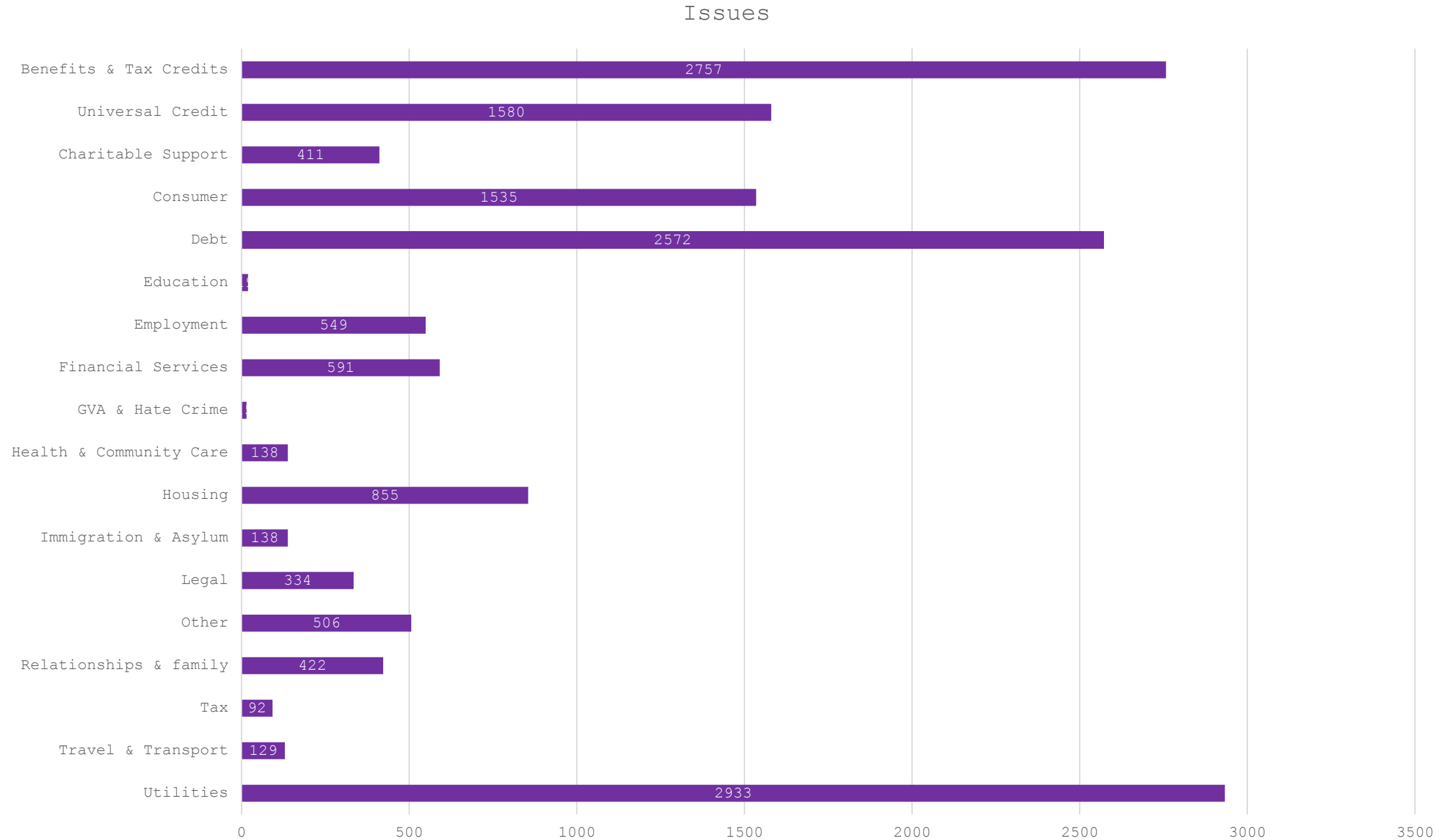


- We advised **4,989** clients covering **15,576** separate issues.
- We recorded **7,293** separate cases with **11,673** separate activities over all channels.

- Though our Adviceline, Citizens Advice Hartlepool assisted **1,851** clients with an average call duration of **7.6 minutes**.
- Another **469** clients were supported via email.

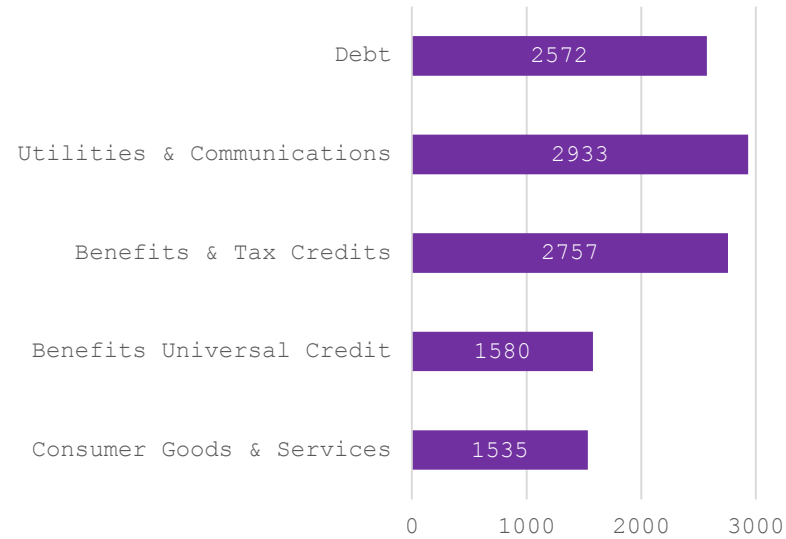


The issues we helped people with throughout 2024/2025

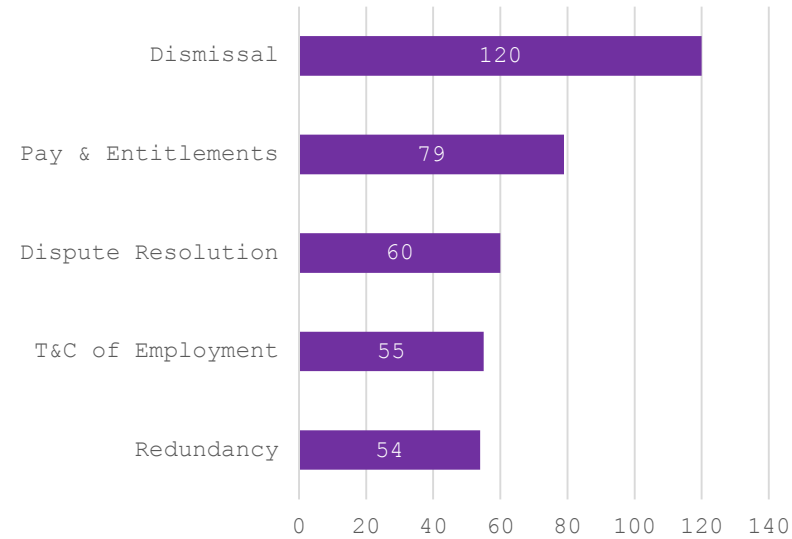


The Top 5 Issues

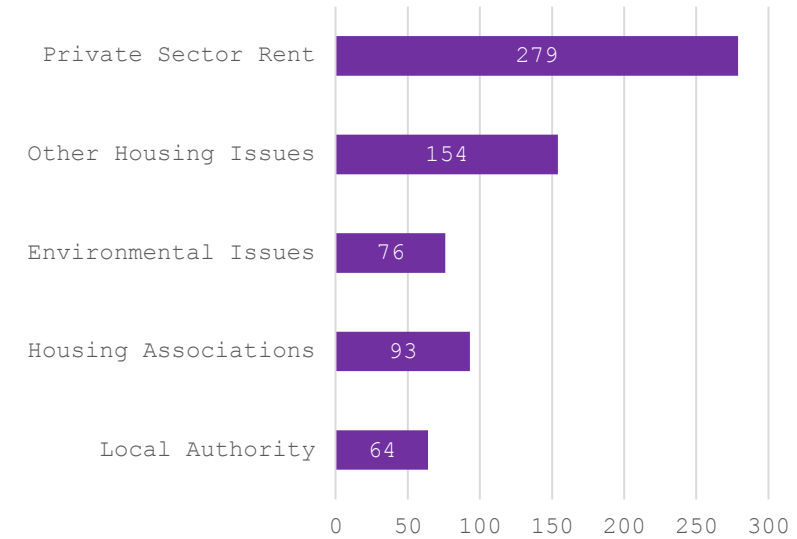
Top 5 Issues



Employment



Housing



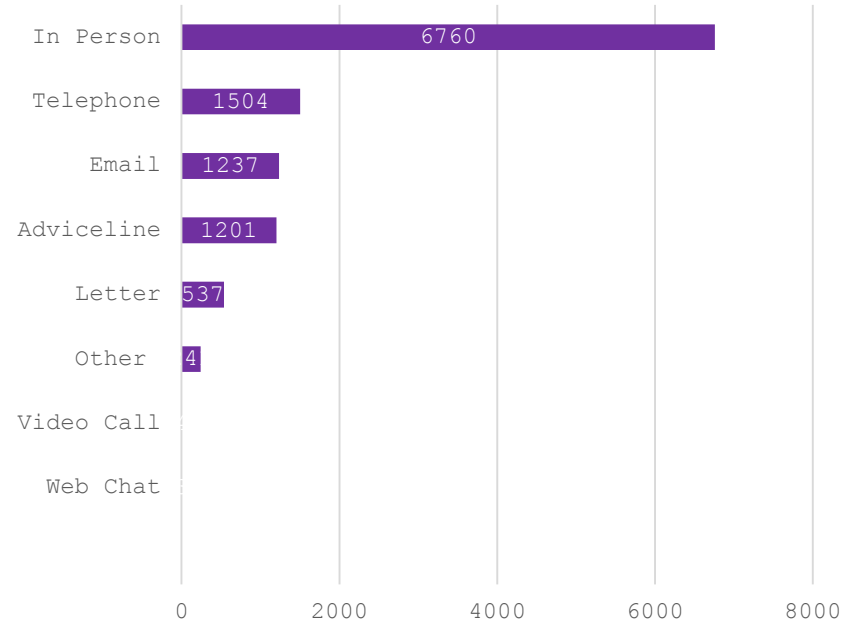
- By analyzing what our clients tell us, we adapt our services to meet real needs.
- We use those insights to push for better systems and support across Hartlepool.

- From payslips to problems, we're here to help.

- From eviction fears to rental rights – we're here.

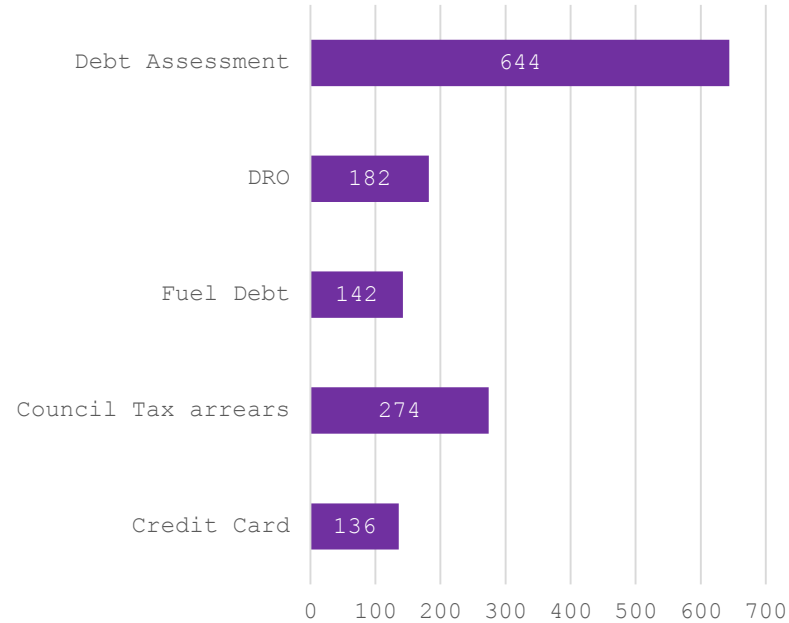
The Top 5 Issues

Channel of Delivery



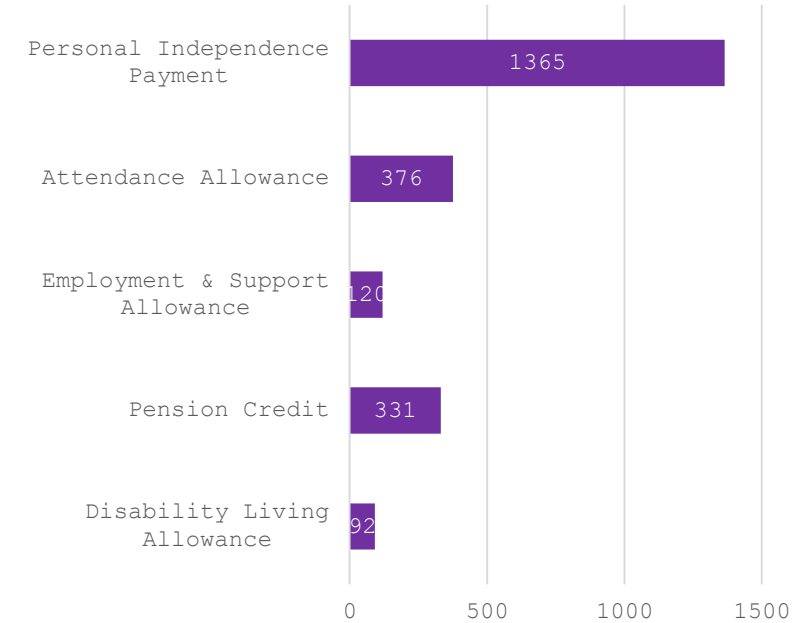
- Advice without barriers, digital, local, personal.

Debt



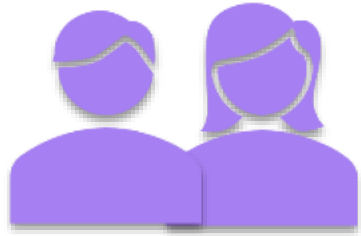
- Debt doesn't define you. Advice can free you.

Benefits



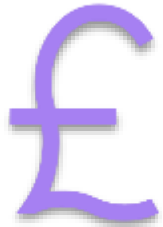
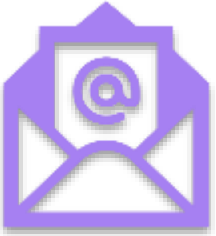
- Your entitlement, your support, your right

Our Impact?



- During **2024/2025** we assisted **1,793** clients with benefits. This involved new benefit claims, reviews and appeals.
- We assisted **185** clients on employment related matters including Settlement Agreements
- Another **526** clients were assisted with debt via repayment plans, debt write-offs and formal insolvency.

- Our debt team has four approved DRO intermediaries and a total of **£646,971** of debt was written off. A further **£272,000** of debt was managed via repayment plans with our assistance.



- Across the service we helped people gain a total of **£3,689,540** in additional income via benefit claims that they were entitled to.

Client Journeys

Journey 1

A client came to us worried about delays in their Universal Credit payment. While helping resolve the issue, we discovered they were also struggling with rent arrears and facing eviction. Our adviser didn't stop at benefits; we connected them with our housing specialist, helped negotiate with their landlord, and supported them in applying for a Discretionary Housing Payment. The result: secure housing, restored income, and peace of mind.

Journey 2

When a client contacted us about unaffordable energy bills, we didn't just help them access the Warm Home Discount. We explored their wider financial situation, identified underlying debt issues, and noticed signs of mental health strain. We referred them to our debt team and signposted to local mental health services. Our advice was the entry point, but the support was comprehensive.

Journey 3

A single parent came to us after losing their job. We helped them understand their rights around redundancy and claim the benefits they were entitled to. But we didn't stop there, we also helped them access free school meals, apply for a local hardship fund, and connect with a training provider to explore new career options. Our approach ensured they weren't just surviving, but rebuilding.



Volunteering and Feedback

There is no typical volunteer at Citizens Advice. Our volunteers have a range of ages and come from different backgrounds with varied life experiences.

The roles we can offer volunteers are both challenging and rewarding and our volunteers enjoy being able to make such a valuable contribution and positive impact to people's lives. “

“The service has been brilliant; CAB has been very helpful and took so much pressure off me”

Without our volunteers, we simply couldn't do what we do. By training and investing in our volunteers, we help to develop individuals' personal abilities, the way they feel about themselves, their skills and their community.

This can have a significant impact through:

- gaining practical skills.
- increasing employability.
- increasing sense of purpose or self-esteem.
- having a positive effect on health.
- Feeling more engaged with the local community.

Our Funders

Citizens Advice Hartlepool has a range of contracts, service level agreements, grants and donations and is funded by:

- Money Advice and Pensions Service
- The British Gas Energy Trust
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Tees Valley Move Forward

We also receive donation from local companies and private individuals.

We are thankful for the financial help we receive from all who support us. It enables us to develop innovative projects that make a difference to the community. We always welcome new partners who can help us build on our work.



Money Advice & Pensions Service



British Gas Energy Trust



L.E.A.P



HumanKind



The National Lottery Community Fund



Hartlepool Borough Council

Volunteers

Advisers/Assessors		Reception/Clerical Staff
➤ Andrew Will ➤ Anne Gardiner ➤ Chris Pendlington ➤ Paula Peak* ➤ Owen Elliot ➤ Craig Symons* ➤ Fallon Eglintine	➤ Mira Fratila ➤ Lillie Mann ➤ Lea Linda Binda* ➤ Pinkie Kwaitane* ➤ Lea Harper ➤ Rosan Barnett	➤ Dorothy Storr* ➤ Kathleen Laffey ➤ Sheila Pearson* ➤ John Jenkins* ➤ Julie Fox* ➤ Jackie William ➤ Susan Alsop ➤ Mercia Watson
➤ Geoff Weighill ➤ Jaedan Ali* ➤ James Simpson* ➤ Janet Payne ➤ John Winter	➤ Sam Fletcher* ➤ Samuela Ansah* ➤ Shalom Akinwolemiwa* ➤ Brandon Specter	Administrative Officers
		➤ Sheila Nicolson ➤ Wayne McCormack

Paid Staff	Helen Howson – Chief Executive Officer Ross Brooks – General Manager Janet Noble – Training Officer
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Debt Team	Energy Team	Adviceline
➤ Gillian Hargin ➤ Janet Noble ➤ Jill Hutton ➤ Ross Brooks	➤ Carol Dees ➤ James Gilbert-Jupp* ➤ Lisa Anderson ➤ Vera Martinez ➤ Warren Rowbotham	➤ Julie Lloyd ➤ Vera Martinez ➤ Shirley Spence
Financial Inclusion Worker		Advocacy Support Worker
➤ Beth Noon		➤ Carol Dees

Trustees

Chairman

- Tony Raine

Vice Chairman

- Edwin Jeffries

Treasurer

- Gayle Longmire

Elected Members

- Tony Jackson
- Brenda Harrison
- Dr Lynne Humphries
- Julie Seymour

*Left During the Organisation during the period 2024/2025

Public Benefit of Citizens Advice Hartlepool

The charity's aims and achievements set out have been undertaken within this report. The activities set out in this report have been undertaken to further the organization's charitable purposes for the public benefit.
The Trustees have complied with the duty under Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charities Commission and the Trustees and have paid due regard to this guidance in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.
The organization's main objective is the promotion of any charitable purpose for the benefit of the community in Hartlepool by the advancement of education, the protection of health and the relief of poverty, sickness and distress.

Statement of Purpose and Strategic Objectives

The Citizens Advice service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice and counsel to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.
Citizens Advice Hartlepool aims to: • Provide the advice people need for the problems they face; • Improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives • Train all workers to provide an accurate, high quality client-centred service
Citizens Advice Hartlepool provides services that work to: • Inform people about the law and how it affects them • Advise people of the possible options available to them and the potential consequences of different courses of action • Listen to and support people as they consider and decide what to do • Assist people in pursuing their chosen course of action • Influence those responsible for policies and services by recommending changes based upon people's experiences.

Citizens Advice Hartlepool Key Objectives

- The maintenance and development of high quality client-centred service
- Increased partnership working as a means of meeting client expectations
- The provision of support and advice, particularly for clients with the greatest needs
- To maintain effective governance and increase the reputation and profile of the organisation in Hartlepool.
- To build upon the commitment of the staff through effective recognition and personal development strategies
- The development of a finance strategy that supports the aims and aspirations of the organisation and its long-term viability

Citizens Advice Hartlepool helps people find a way forward

- We provide free, confidential and independent advice to help people overcome their problems. We are a voice for our clients on the issues that matter to them.
- We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment. We're here for everyone.

**Citizens Advice Hartlepool is the operating name of Hartlepool Citizens Advice Bureau.
Registered office:**

**87 Park Road, Hartlepool TS26 9HP. Registered charity number: 1140773
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRN 617628
www.citizensadvice-hartlepool.org.uk**