

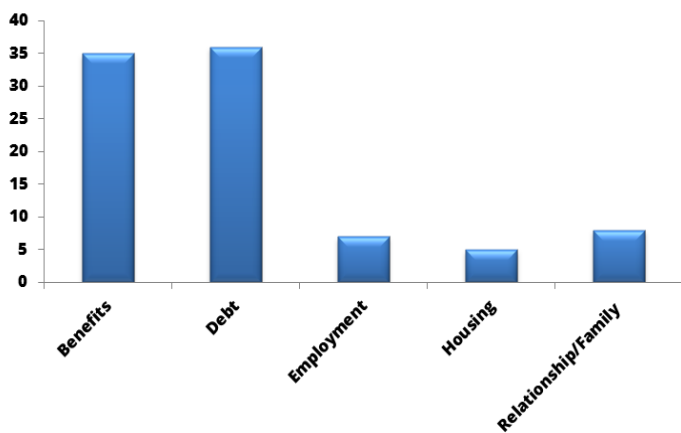
Citizens Advice Wakefield District Newsletter

March 2017

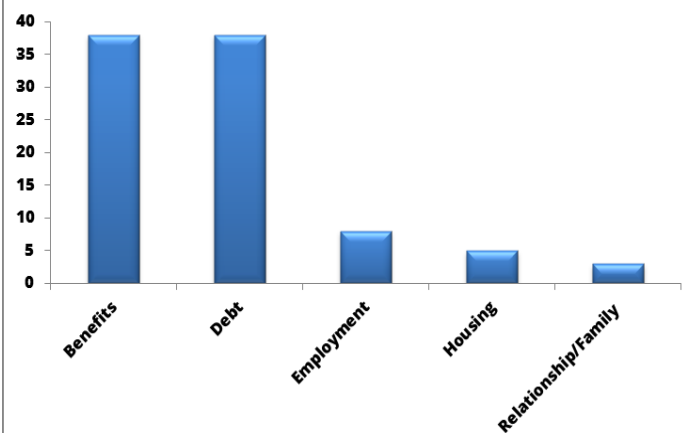
How are we doing?

In excess of 1400 + residents in Wakefield District accessed our service in January and the high demand continued into February when we assisted over 1300 + residents; these figures don't account for those service users who we assist with ongoing issues.

Top 5 Enquiry Issues (by percentage) January 2017



Top 5 Enquiry Issues (by percentage) February 2017



Universal Credit

UC—merges six benefits and tax credits into a single payment and replaces an overly complex system. There are just under 450,000 people currently on UC and the programmes roll out is about to be cranked up, with new groups of claimants and a different IT system.

At Citizens Advice, nationally, we have helped with 38,000 UC enquiries. These numbers are on the rise as the roll out continues. Our early data suggests there are a number of implementation issues, including confusion about benefit calculations, trouble getting through on phone lines, and access to support. These challenges compound some of the controversial design elements of UC. Requiring people to wait six weeks to receive their first payment can put significant pressure on finances and lead to debt. A minimum income floor, which after a year, assumes that self employed people are earning the minimum wage even if they are not, creates new hurdles for those working for themselves.

Hardly surprising, reform of this magnitude, with such a major impact on people's lives, will take time to get right.

****UC in Wakefield is currently rolled out to 'single' claimants only with the full service roll out in 2018. However, Barnsley go to full service in December 2017; this may impact on some residents of Wakefield District who fall on the 'boundary' and whose post-codes fall in the Barnsley DWP catchment****

Citizens Advice Wakefield District provides the advice and information function under the healthwatch Wakefield service

Despite what the name suggests its not just about health we can give advice and information on Social Care issues as well

Telephone 01924 234007 or drop into one of our offices across the district

