

## Working through the Pandemic

Although our face to face services have been suspended since the 24th March, our staff and volunteers have continued to successfully deliver services from home, via telephone, email and webchat.

Between the **24th March—31st July** we have assisted **3846 clients** who have brought **8980 issues** to us for advice. Our **biggest enquiries** areas dealt with throughout that time were **Benefits, Debt** and **Employment** issues.

## \*\*\*\*\* Resuming Face to Face Services \*\*\*\*\*

We are pleased to announce we are now slowly re-opening limited face to face services; our offices have been made Covid secure in line with government guidelines, for the safety of our staff, our volunteers and our service users.

St Swithuns  
Community Centre  
Arncliffe Road  
Eastmoor

Tuesday  
10.00 am—12.00 noon  
Drop In

St Georges  
Community Centre  
Broadway  
Lupset

Tuesday  
10.00 am—12.00 noon  
Drop In

Hemsworth Town  
Hall Community  
Centre  
Bullenshaw Road  
Hemsworth

Friday  
10.00 am —12.00 noon  
Drop In

South Elmsall  
Resource Centre  
Westfield Lane  
South Elmsall

Tuesday  
10.00 am—12.00 noon  
Drop In

Lightwaves Leisure  
& Community Centre  
Lower York Street  
Wakefield

Wednesday  
10.00 am—12.00 noon  
Drop In

Warwick Community  
Shop  
No 5 Pinewood Place  
Knottingley  
(From 25th Sept)

Friday  
10.00—12.00 noon  
Drop In

Wakefield City Centre, 27 King Street  
Wakefield

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday  
10.00 am—3.00 pm  
Drop In

Our other outreach offices will re-open  
across the coming months. Keep in touch  
via our website  
[www.wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk](http://www.wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk)

### Other ways to get advice

Telephone us 03444 111 444

Email us via our website [www.wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk](http://www.wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk)

(Web) Chat & Self-Help [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

Our advisers are available Monday to Friday 9 am—5 pm

# Research & Campaigning

## **Excess debts - who has fallen behind on their household bills due to coronavirus?**

[Excess debts - who has fallen behind on their household bills due to coronavirus? \[ 280 kb\]](#)

Overall, we estimate that 6 million UK adults have fallen behind on at least one household bill during the pandemic

- 3.4 million on their mobile phone or broadband bills
- 3 million on their water bills
- 2.8 million on their energy bills
- 2.8 million on their council tax
- 1.2 million on their rent

People who are more likely to have been directly affected by coronavirus, to have played a key role in the response, or to have already been in a precarious financial situation beforehand are far more likely to have fallen behind on their bills.

Coronavirus has pushed many people into debt that will take them years to get out of. We estimate that it would take an average person that we help with debt problems at least 30 months to pay back just their priority debts, assuming that they spent their entire disposable income on repayments each month.

### **Coronavirus debts have implications for the economy as a whole**

Without targeted support, high levels of debt will reduce consumer spending and could dampen the economic recovery - **every pound spent on debt repayments is a pound not spent consuming goods and services**. Moreover, many creditors - including landlords, local authorities, and essential service providers - are likely to face high levels of bad debt resulting in higher costs for consumers and bill payers.

### **Government must step in with financial help for coronavirus debts**

Without help, many households will be trapped in unfair, unaffordable debt for years to come. The exact mechanism for such relief will vary across sectors, but should be approached with the following principles in mind:

- Financial support should be offered across sectors.
- Financial support should be offered as a one-off intervention to help deal with debts built up due to coronavirus.
- Help should be targeted at those who have borne the brunt of the financial impact of coronavirus.
- The costs of relief should be shared between the government, creditors, and individuals.

Help could include mechanisms, such as funding for local authorities to support people behind on council tax due to coronavirus, loans and grants for landlords and tenants to make up rent arrears and help people stay in their homes, and new guidance for banks to reschedule and provide relief for unaffordable lockdown debts.

## **Lockdown Lifeline: Ensuring adequate support across the benefits system during the Covid-19 pandemic (July 2020)**

[Lockdown Lifeline: Ensuring adequate support across the benefits system during the Covid-19 pandemic \[ 240 kb\]](#)

Coronavirus has had a sudden and unprecedented impact on people's jobs and incomes. The Government has acted quickly to improve the processing of benefit claims and increase support in parts of the system – but further urgent measures are needed to fill ongoing gaps and help shore up people's incomes in the coming weeks.

The scale of the impact coronavirus will likely have on people's lives means it's vital we now build upon these changes to ensure the right support is in place for all groups. This includes those facing a temporary income shock, but also groups who risk facing longer-term and more severe economic detriment. The need to act becomes all the more critical as the existing measures introduced to protect people's finances gradually come to an end.

In Lockdown Lifeline, we outline changes to the benefits system required across three areas:

- **Widening eligibility and access to the benefits system** to ensure everyone who needs support can access it
- **Immediate measures** to help ensure adequate support across the benefits system
- **Reviewing support** for groups who **risk facing a disproportionate impact** due to coronavirus

## Future Proof: Challenges and opportunities in providing great service in energy

[Future Proof: Challenges and opportunities in providing great service in energy \[ 7.7 mb\]](#)

The energy industry is undergoing a number of changes, with market consolidation, decarbonisation, and the recovery from COVID-19 bring additional challenges to the market.

We identified key challenges, and opportunities to improve for energy suppliers in providing customer service.

Challenges included overcoming the poor reputation and complexity of the market, improving experience of complaints and responding to diversifying communication preferences.

Our research also identified where there was most opportunity for companies to improve their services.

These included:

- helping them to engage with choices about their energy
- providing a more personal service
- and providing more services that can reduce costs and reduce carbon

Our report was informed by research by The Institute of Customer Service. Their full research report is available [here](#) [  7.3 mb].

### Other News

#### \*\*\*\*\*JOB VACANCY\*\*\*\*\*

We are looking to recruit a **Generalist Outreach Adviser** to join our outreach team

This is a 12 month contract, working 37 hours per week with a gross annual salary of £24,157

To request a job pack which includes full details of the post either visit our website [www.wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk](http://www.wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk) or request a pack via email at [districtoffice@wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk](mailto:districtoffice@wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk)

Closing date for application is 18th September

Interviews will be held on 30th September