

Our impact from 1st January 2023.

The Difference we Make to Staffordshire Moorlands



citizens
advice

We are Citizens Advice Staffordshire North and Stoke on Trent

On 1st January 2023 Biddulph, Leek and Cheadle Citizens advice merged to become part of Citizens Advice Staffordshire North and Stoke on Trent.

By keeping local offices we ensure we are an important part of the community, with a credible understanding of local needs, whilst being able to offer additional support via other internal services.

We use our local knowledge to tailor our services for local people whilst also influencing local policies and practices to improve their lives

What We Do

We help people with a range of problems including issues with housing, debt, benefits, employment, relationships and consumer rights.

Sometimes people have more than one issue they need help with. They may even return to us on multiple occasions.



In the first 8 months of 2023 we have assisted 3,651 clients with over 22,189 separate issues.

Who We've Helped

Gender



Disability / Long-term health



Ethnicity



How We Help



We can deal with most of the issues people come to us with by tailoring our advice to their needs and their preferred contact method.

As we come out of the pandemic clients are choosing different ways to access our local services

- 24% of clients seek e mail advice
- 42% via the local and national phone numbers
- 34% via face 2 face contact

The Difference We Make



The wider impact of advice - what we achieve as a result of solving problems and providing support - is just as important.

So far in 2023 we have generated income gains of £1,578,052.00 for residents in Staffordshire Moorlands.

And helped them to find solutions to deal with £162,691.00 of debt.

Sara's Story

Sara (not her real name) came into the Biddulph office - she is in receipt of Income Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) due to chronic osteoarthritis and was receiving Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction for help towards her rent and council tax.

In May 2023 Sara and her partner ended their relationship, he made a claim for Universal Credit (UC) in his own right whilst Sara's ESA was adjusted as she was now a single person. When Sara's ESA was reduced Housing Benefit made a mistake and ended her Housing Benefit claim telling her she needed to claim Universal Credit to get help with her housing costs.

As a result of no rent payments being received her Housing provider started possession proceedings against her, and at this point Sara contacted us for advice.

We were able to advise Sara that her Housing Benefit should not have stopped as it was just a change of circumstances, and we helped Sara to request a review of this decision which was ultimately successful, in the interim we also negotiated with her landlord to halt the possession proceedings so Sara has some peace of mind. A better off calculation showed that had Sara moved over to Universal Credit she would have been £7.78 a week worse off than on her current benefits so we were able to talk to her about the universal Credit Managed Migration process and advised her to wait to be moved to UC.

Why Our Advice Matters

If left unsolved, problems don't just affect the individual - they affect this community.

Solving them creates considerable value to society.

- **79% of our client say they could not have resolved their issue themselves.**
- **76% of clients came to us when they needed to take action urgently/imminently .**
- **64% of our clients reported feeling less stressed, depressed or anxious after our intervention.**

We Are a Volunteer Service

The wider value of volunteering

We have a group of volunteers who give their time, skills and experience to enable us to reach as many people as we do.

There are also considerable benefits for them too, such as improved employability.

So far this year our trained volunteers gave up **3063 hours of work** for the during the year. We estimate the value of this help at **£33,142.00**





**citizens
advice**

**Citizens Advice Staffordshire
North and Stoke on Trent
would like to thank SMDC for
your continued support.**

**Your support helps us to make
a real difference.**