

Citizens Advice Wigan Borough

Our impact in 2020/2021



**Wigan
Borough**

We are Citizens Advice Wigan Borough

Whoever you are, whatever the problem

Free, confidential, independent and impartial advice,
to anyone who needs us, on their rights and
responsibilities.

£3,067,067

saved to government and public services
last year. That's £2.76 for every £1
invested in our service.

Our overall impact

COVID-19 brought many challenges last year. Citizens Advice Wigan Borough responded quickly and decisively, adapting its services to continue providing vital information and advice to people, especially to those impacted by the pandemic.

Despite the suspension of our face-to-face services and reduced staff numbers, our advisers were able to juggle working from home with childcare to ensure clients remained at the heart of everything we do.

11,151

clients helped in
2020/21

30,167

issues dealt with in
2020/21

£4.6m

income gained, reinstated
or maintained*

£819k

client debt dealt with
by advisers

**Universal Credit, Personal
Independence Payment, Council
Tax Arrears, Fuel Debts**

were the most common issues we
helped with

The data above relates to everyone we helped, including those funded through national contracts such as **Help to Claim, Pension Wise** and the **Money Advice Service**. The following pages provide local data relating to our clients in Wigan, Leigh and Makerfield.

**based on an annualised equivalent*

How we've helped in Wigan

The data below relates to clients from **Wigan** wards who have been assisted by our local service (where a postcode has been provided).

The highest number of clients came from **Ince**.

1,355

clients helped in
2020/21

5,099

issues dealt with in
2020/21

£540k

income gained, reinstated
or maintained*

£250k

client debt dealt with
by advisers

**Universal Credit, Personal
Independence Payment, Council
Tax Arrears, Fuel Debts**

were the most common issues we
helped with

**based on an annualised equivalent*

How we've helped in Leigh

The data below relates to clients from **Leigh** wards who have been assisted by our local service (where a postcode has been provided).

The highest number of clients came from Leigh

1,273

clients helped in
2020/21

4,558

issues dealt with in
2020/21

£570k

income gained, reinstated
or maintained*

£184k

client debt dealt with
by advisers

**Universal Credit, Personal
Independence Payment, Fuel
Debts, Debt Relief Orders**

were the most common issues we
helped with

**based on an annualised equivalent*

How we've helped in Makerfield

The data below relates to clients from **Makerfield** wards who have been assisted by our local service (where a postcode has been provided).

The highest number of clients came from **Abram**.

1,058

clients helped in
2020/21

3,708

issues dealt with in
2020/21

£430k

income gained, reinstated
or maintained*

£220k

client debt dealt with
by advisers

**Universal Credit, Personal
Independence Payment, Fuel
Debts, Council Tax Arrears**

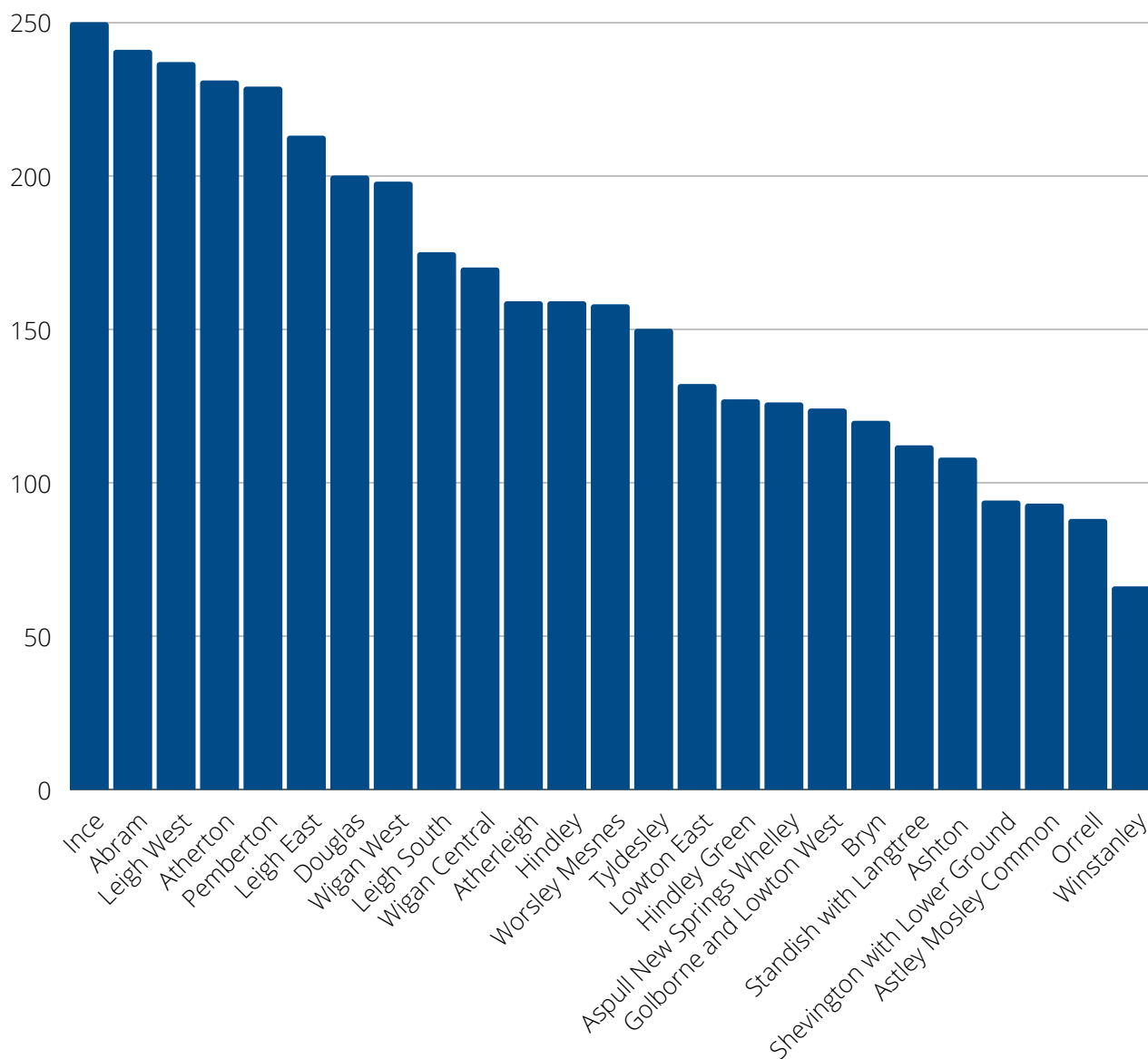
were the most common issues we
helped with

**based on an annualised equivalent*

Helping across the Borough

We're proud to offer advice and support to residents from all 25 wards across Wigan, Leigh and Makerfield, and work closely with councillors and community groups to reach as many residents as possible.

The following chart shows the number of clients we were able to help from each ward respectively (where a postcode was provided) - providing a picture of where our clients come from across the Borough.



What we do

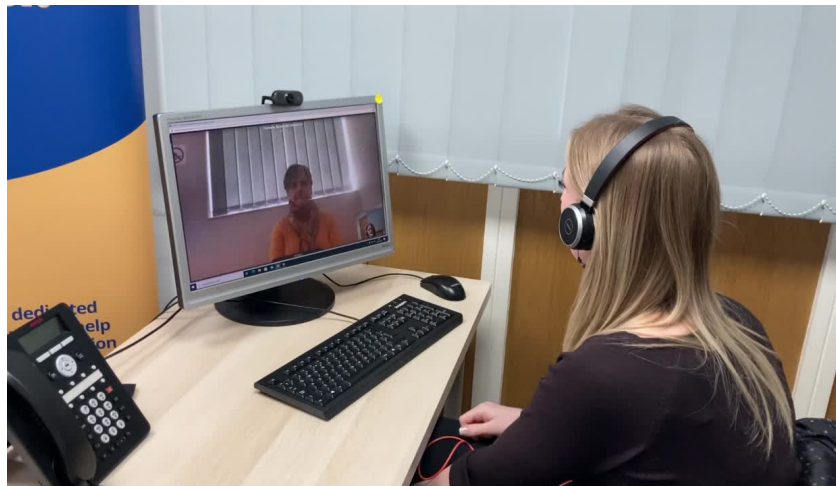
We give free, confidential, independent and impartial advice to our clients on their rights and responsibilities. We help people with a range of problems, including issues with housing, debt, benefits, employment, relationships, and consumer rights.

Sometimes people have more than one issue they need help with.

How we help

Last year we provided advice by **telephone, email, web chat** as well as via our **video advice service**, which launched in November 2020.

Our Attend Anywhere service meant we could provide face-to-face advice to our clients in place of our traditional in-person services.



"I liked the fact you could see the adviser who was speaking to you, it gives you that feedback which you can't get over the phone. It was very easy, even for someone like me who's not computer savvy."

- Quote from one of our Attend Anywhere clients

This is Susan

She came to us for help via our Attend Anywhere video service for help appealing an unsuccessful Personal Independence Payment application.

Despite having several long-term mental and physical health conditions, Susan's application was denied and her worsening financial situation was causing her stress, contributing to her ill health.

Our adviser was able to assist Susan with completing the necessary paperwork and guide her through the entire appeal process.

Six weeks later, she was offered the full sum that she was entitled to without having to attend a hearing. She was also awarded £2,500 owed to her in backdated payments. She told us:

"This is something I would never have been able to do myself. The back pay I will receive will make a world of difference to my life and the ongoing payments will help me out of financial hardship.

I'd use Citizens Advice again in a heartbeat."



This is Bernard

He came to us for help via our Adviceline after receiving notice from a debt collection company regarding an unpaid mobile phone bill.

Bernard lived alone and despite being elderly, partially sighted and hard of hearing, he received a letter stating that debt collectors would be visiting his property to recover the debt. This caused him significant distress.

Our adviser was able to negotiate with the provider on Bernard's behalf and reduce the outstanding balance on the account from £234 to £37. We were also able to close the account at his request, making sure he avoided any further costs.

Bernard was delighted with the outcome and got back in touch with us to say: **“Thank you very much for everything you have done.**

I don't know what I would have done without you.”



Our advice is effective

Problems don't happen in isolation and can have severe consequences. Solving them stops these situations escalating.



9 out of 10 of clients would be 'very likely' to recommend the service



9 out of 10 clients said we helped them find a way forward

Why fixing problems matters

If left unsolved, problems don't just affect the individual - they affect the community. Solving them creates considerable value to society.



Poor mental health costs the UK economy between £74 billion and £99 billion a year (Mind)



70 million work days are lost each year due to mental health problems (Mental Health Foundation).

"I just want to say thank you for all help you gave me. Before I came to Citizens Advice I was on the verge of ending my life as couldnt see a way out. Now I can see light at the end of the tunnel. Thank you."

- Quote from our 2021 customer feedback survey

Our value to society

For every £1 invested in our service in 2020/2021, we generated:

£2.76

in savings to government and public services (fiscal benefits)

Total: £3,067,067

£23.69

in public value (wider economic and social benefits)

Total: £26,314,272

£12.76

in benefits to individuals (value to our clients)

Total: £14,174,395

It's impossible to put a financial value on everything we do - but where we can, we have. We've used a Treasury-approved model to do this.

From our robust management information, we've also separately considered the financial benefits to the people we help.

Our value to this community

The value we bring to our community isn't just financial. Our work has a significant social impact on people and communities, even more so since moving into lockdown in March 2020. Here's what our clients told us:

"Citizens Advice Wigan helped more than they could ever know. I was getting to the point of giving up, I can't thank them enough.

"It's very rare that organisations meet the needs of autistic people, but at every step Citizens Advice Wigan were spot on."

"The adviser went above and beyond what I expected. They were super polite and helpful. She helped me with my issue, while being relatable and professional."

Citizens Advice 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 and consumers on the issues that matter to them.

We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment.

We're here for everyone.

cawb.org.uk



©Copyright © 2016 - 2021 Citizens Advice Wigan Borough. All rights reserved.
Citizens Advice Wigan Borough is an operating name of Citizens Advice Service in the Borough of Wigan.
Registered charity number 701882. Company limited by guarantee. Registered number 2366214 England
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRN: 617797
Registered office: Magnum House, Suite 2.1, 33 Lord Street, Leigh, Greater Manchester, WN7 1BY