



## **Citizens Advice Oldham**

# **Shaw and Crompton Parish Council Report Advice Services Provision 1 October 2020 - 31 December 2020**

## **1. Background**

Citizens Advice Oldham, part of Citizens Advice Pennine West, ordinarily delivers advice sessions on a weekly basis at Crompton Library. At the present time we are offering our services by other means through our telephone Adviceline, telephone and video appointments, web chat, email and self help resources including web content and video clips. All our services are provided by experienced advisers and are jointly funded by Shaw and Crompton Parish Council and Oldham Council.

## **2. Clients and Issues**

Between 1 October 2020 and 31 December 2020, Citizens Advice Oldham helped 67 Shaw and Crompton residents with 293 issues. These figures do not include where we have had more limited advice interactions, such as signposting to other services.

We are now finding that residents present with multiple and much more complex issues, sometimes requiring more than one appointment. Often some additional support is also needed, for example from our benefits specialists. The predominant issues during this period were around welfare benefits (including Universal Credit) and debt. Employment and housing feature less than might be expected and the stay on evictions and furlough scheme may go some way to explain this. A more detailed breakdown follows below.

We helped Shaw and Crompton residents to achieve income gains of almost £90,000. As debt recovery actions had ceased, there were no debts written off during these months. However some work with residents was still undertaken by our specialist debt teams.

## **3. Further developments**

Our Adviceline telephone service is now a freephone having previously been a local rate number. It operates Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm. There has been a poster and social media campaign in the two areas to publicise this change and this is ongoing. This has also helped to let residents know that our services are still available to them.

A further development is the Out of Hours service 6pm to 9pm on weekdays. We are continuing to look at ways to make our services more accessible to all and are continuing to use and explore an increasing number of channels and technologies to achieve this aim. We are working closely with local authority and partner agencies to help residents get more digitally included and to build better financial resilience.

#### 4. Summary of Issues

Benefits and Tax Credits	121
Benefits - Universal Credit	59
Consumer Goods and Services	2
Debt	47
Discrimination, Hate and GVA	3
Education	1
Employment	13
Financial Services and Capability	11
Health and Community Care	3
Housing	11
Immigration and Asylum	1
Legal	3
Other (including Food)	5
Relationships and Family	2
Tax	1
Travel and Transport	8
Utilities and Communications	2
Grand Total	293