



The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane  
Sheffield  
S1 4FW

Tel: 0114 253 6703

[www.citizensadvice/sheffield.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice/sheffield.org.uk)

To: All Candidates in the General Election 2017 in Sheffield

May 2017

Dear Candidate

Citizens Advice Sheffield helped 23,000 people in 2016/17. As well as helping people to find a way forwards, we also gain important insights into the many issues affecting people in their day to day lives. This enables us to identify policy solutions that would solve many common problems.

We are pleased to enclose Citizens Advice's "Manifesto for the next government" in which we set out policy solutions in five key areas: the benefits system; job security; personal finances; consumer markets; and advice services. All of these solutions would be of great benefit to many people and families in Sheffield. We have provided some more information about this overleaf.

We very much hope that the new government will tackle these issues, and hope that you will support the policy changes recommended in our Manifesto.

If you would like to find out more about our work please see our recent publication "How we help people" which is available from our website.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Gamsu".

Mark Gamsu  
Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Buck".

Andy Buck  
Chief Executive



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## **Welfare benefits**

The way welfare benefits for people who are ill or disabled work very often adds to the difficulty and stress that people are already facing.

Our two reports on Personal Independence Payment describe our concerns in more detail, and make recommendations for solutions to these concerns:

<https://citizensadvice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/PIP-Sheffield-Citizens-Advice-May-2015.pdf>

<https://citizensadvice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/PIP-and-the-reassessment-of-DLA-claimants-April-2017.pdf>

The delay in paying universal credit leaves increasing numbers of people having to turn to loans (which they can ill-afford) and foodbanks for essential support.

## **Work**

The 55% of people in poverty who are in a household where at least one person works often face low pay, uncertain contracts and difficulties in enforcing their rights.

Our submission to the recent Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee inquiry into the future world of work describes some of these concerns in more detail:

<https://citizensadvice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/BEIS-Select-Committee-submission.12.16.pdf>

Our national report about income security provides insights into why this is so important for people and families' well being:

[https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/welfare%20publications/The%20Importance%20of%20Income%20Security%20\(Final\).pdf](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/welfare%20publications/The%20Importance%20of%20Income%20Security%20(Final).pdf)

## **Debt**

The 4,700 people we helped with debt continue to face considerable difficulties.

The pay day loan cap has helped to reduce this problem, and is a principle that could be extended to high cost credit.

Tackling unfair and unaffordable debt collection, including from public authorities would similarly be beneficial.

## **Consumers**

The people who are often most disadvantaged in everyday consumer markets, for example energy and communications, are the very people who can least afford the contracts and tariffs.

Government action to require fairer practices in these markets would help these people and families.