



Sheffield

# Help to Claim: Universal Credit

## **Citizens Advice Sheffield is the city's leading advice service**

Through our Help to Claim service, Citizens Advice Sheffield provides people with advice on how to apply for Universal Credit and supports them through the application process.

The support provided will vary depending on the individual needs of the client, but it might include things such as; helping someone gather evidence of their housing or childcare costs; ensuring people know that Alternative Payment Arrangements are available and offering advice on what to expect at a work coach appointment and how to prepare for it.

Following the launch of the full service on the 1st April, during the first two months almost a 1000 people, with over 3000 issues. We have helped people in the most deprived wards of Sheffield. We have helped people secure over £1.5 million pounds in unclaimed benefits, our comprehensive triage also identifies other benefits that people may be entitled to.

We have also advised a further 98 people past the point of first correct payment.

A comprehensive triage is at the heart of our service, clients can either contact the Freephone helpline **0800 1448 444** Monday to Friday 8am—6.00pm or attend any of our drop in locations and receive a face to face appointment if required.

We have recently introduced conference calling for telephone claims, this is very beneficial for clients who have language barriers or lack digital skills and would not be able to maintain an online claim.

We are launching a Consultancy Line for partners **0114 354 0656** Monday to Friday 10.00am—1.00pm. This line is for partners who may be supporting a client with a digital claim or who may have a complex or technical issue that needs resolving.

**Universal Credit Help to Claim 0800 1448 444 Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm**

# Help to Claim During April and May 2019

**We have helped 998 people**



**515 women**

**444 men**

**947 working age people**

**358 disabled or ill people**

**227 black and ethnic minority people**

**We have helped with 3399 issues**



**2796 Initial claim issues**

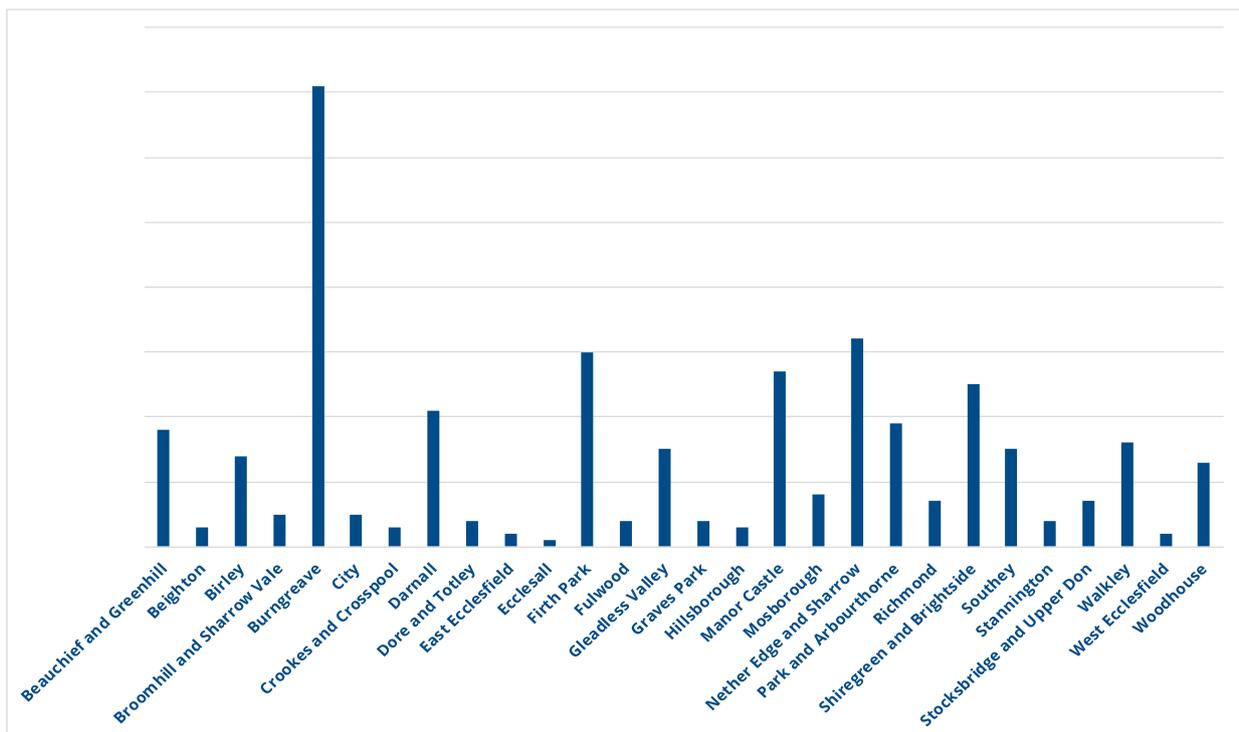
**102 Standard element issues**

**164 Housing element issues**

**108 Calculation of income and savings**

**229 Other issues**

**We have helped more people where help is most needed**



## We have helped people maximise their income

	Number of outcomes	Client count	Amount	Average per client
Initial Claim	152	135	£99,3556	£7,360
Standard element	35	35	£16,2334	£4,638
Housing element	30	30	£14,5459	£4,849
Limited capability for work element	5	5	£17,651	£3,530
Child element	21	21	£98,202	£4,676
Child care costs	1	1	£4,973	£1,973
Carers elements	5	5	£9,612	£1,922
Child benefit	1	1	£1,076	£1,076
Working and child tax credits	1	1	£6,105	£6,105
Job seekers allowance	3	3	£9,503	£3,168
Carers allowance	1	1	£3,440	£3,440
Employment and support allowance	7	7	£30,124	£4,303
Personal independence payment	4	4	£21,414	£5,353
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>£1,503,447</b>	<b>£8,844</b>



### 6 Assessment and support workers



### Dedicated help to claim Free-phone available 8am-6pm

**0800 144 8 444**



### Face to face appointments

## We have helped improve public policy

We produced a briefing note on “the Struggles of Non-Digital Claimants” using our own evidence, enhanced by cases from the Local Authority and with strong support from our Universal Credit Partnership manager locally. The issues were raised in Parliament by MP for Sheffield Central and resulted in meetings with senior Universal Credit officials in London and Sheffield. They appear to have taken on board the problems we raised and we are awaiting their proposals to remedy some of the difficulties. Locally we are currently engaged with DWP to resolve the particular problems experienced by claimants in Mental Health facilities. Nationally the Best Practice Lead team is undertaking further research into the problems of facing “non-digital” claimants which will be fed into the work we started locally. Over the next few months we will be contributing to national research on the difficulties associated with the on-line identity process - Verify.

# Added Value

This report focuses on our Help to Claim service which we deliver to Sheffield communities and being part of the national contact centre we also help people from across the country.

This service is stronger and more resilient in part because they benefit from our skills and experience of delivering services in other areas. Those services are equipped to respond to local demands, drawing strength and resilience from being connected to a wider range of skills and experience across the organisation's diverse delivery areas.

In addition to the 998 clients seen in April and May, we have also advised a further 98 clients on Universal Credit past the point of first payment.



# A focus on some of the people we have helped

## **Kazim's Story**

Kazim is a 56 year old man who was referred to us for help with making a claim for Universal Credit. As the referral made it clear that he had limited understanding of English he was called back using Language Line phone facility.

It was assessed that, in addition to his limited understanding of spoken English he couldn't read or write and had no digital skills. He would not be able to make and maintain a digital claim for Universal Credit.

A conference call was agreed for later that day to help Karim make his non-digital claim this would be via a call to DWP. Karim was advised on what information he needed to have at hand in order for the claim to succeed.

At the agreed time Karim was called back using the conference facility. The DWP was called as well as Language Line and the claim was made. At the same time an appointment was agreed in the Jobcentre for Karin to confirm his identity.

Universal Credit is now in full payment.

## **Ayesha's Story**

Ayesha is a 34 year old single parent in receipt of Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Child Benefit, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support. Ayesha cannot speak any English, her Benefits were suspended after a return from a four week family visit abroad although she had informed the Job Centre of this.

We established she was away one day longer than period allowed for continuation of benefits, but the Job Centre had not alerted her to the risk when she told them of her intended dates before travelling.

On attending the Job Centre a claim for Universal Credit had been made although due to the language barrier client was not aware of this, we then challenged this requesting a reinstatement of her legacy benefits on the grounds of poor administration.

# Our public phone lines are open every weekday

Adviceline 03444 113 111 Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm

Consumer Advice 03454 04 05 06 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

## How you can help us

If you are interested in volunteering, please take a look at our website.

Citizens Advice Sheffield is a charity.

If you would like to support us financially, please see our mydonate page.

**[www.citizensadvicesheffield.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvicesheffield.org.uk)**

Email: [getintouch@citizensadvicesheffield.org.uk](mailto:getintouch@citizensadvicesheffield.org.uk)

Citizens Advice Sheffield is the operating name of Sheffield Citizens Advice and Law Centre Ltd

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