

A decorative graphic in the bottom left corner featuring overlapping geometric shapes in teal, orange, and pink, forming a stylized 'X' or star-like pattern.

*Upholding justice in  
challenging times*

# 2020/2021 Highlights

The team at Derbyshire Law Centre always make sure that those in need are offered the advice and help they require and deserve. Despite the continuing pandemic, the Derbyshire Law Centre team have been able to service the needs of clients, and enable access to justice and wrap around services for those in need.

In the period September 2020 to August 2021 we have:



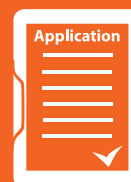
Dealt with  
**4931**  
enquiries



Opened  
**1244**  
new cases



Achieved  
**106**  
homeless  
preventions



Assisted with  
**132** EU  
Settlement  
applications



Held **13**  
Trustee  
meetings

Facilitated **31** clients to negotiate a settlement agreement when they were leaving their employment, preventing the need to go to Employment Tribunal.



Improved the self-confidence and self-esteem of  
**39.4%** of clients



For more information on our performance see pages 24 and 25.

## Who we are:

Like all Law Centres we defend the legal rights of people who cannot afford specialist legal advice. We are a team of legal specialists, including solicitors working in our community to uphold justice and advance equality. Set up in 1989, we are a charitable company and work as a peer led organisation with a Board of Trustees.

## Our Mission

Our mission which has recently been updated reflects our continued commitment to our ethos and to serving our local communities.

***Derbyshire Law Centre's mission as a peer led organisation is to increase access to justice for disadvantaged individuals and communities through the provision of quality assured, accessible, free and low cost legal advice, information and representation to individuals and groups across our geographical area.***

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# Welcome to our review of the year 2020 - 2021

**Thank you for taking the time to read our annual report. We hope that it is interesting, informative, and gives you an insight into how our organisation has risen to the challenges presented by the last year.**

I would firstly like to thank staff and their families for their patience and resilience during these challenging times. Our staff have continued to provide a high quality legal service while rapidly adapting to new working arrangements due to the Covid rules. This has ensured that our clients have had the support and assistance that they need.

I would also like to thank our trustees for responding so positively to the many remote meetings and interviews necessary over the course of the year, often at short notice. It has been a very busy year and your help has allowed us to launch new projects and recruit staff in a timely manner.

We thank Steve Taylor for 31 years of outstanding service, working with clients experiencing issues with housing and homelessness. We wish him a very happy retirement and all the best for the future. Steve will be missed and we thank him for all the work he has done for Derbyshire Law Centre.



**Jenny Flood**  
*Chair of the Management Committee*

Michael Gordon, trustee and colleague, has recently stepped down as Chair of the Trustees. Thank you for steering us safely through the last year and the early phase of the pandemic.

We have given ourselves the task of reviewing our governance and improving our communications. We hope that our review will result in improvements to our working practices and compliance.

After the end of the latest lockdown earlier this year, we have started to see the longer term impact of the pandemic on the mental health of Derbyshire residents. The end of various government measures put in place to help mitigate some of the harsh effects of the pandemic are also starting to have an impact on our communities, such as the end on the ban on evictions, the furlough scheme ending, and the removal of the £20 uplift from Universal Credit. These cuts, along with rises in food prices and energy costs, are all likely to push more people into poverty, unemployment, and debt. Therefore, services which the Law Centre provide are highly likely to be more in demand than ever.

We also thank our funders for your generous support. Your funding has allowed us to continue to provide free legal advice and assistance to our communities during the pandemic. Sadly, we anticipate that the next 12 months will be even more challenging, due to increased demand and ongoing issues related to the pandemic. Your help is very welcome and we hope we can continue to work together closely to meet the demands for high quality social welfare, legal advice and casework across Derbyshire.

**Jenny Flood**

# Senior Solicitor's Report

**I must say that I did not foresee that I would start this year's report where I left off last year. In August 2020 we were taking tentative steps to re-open the office both for staff and the public so that we could start seeing people face to face again. Unfortunately, that did not last long and we were back in lockdown almost before the report was published.**

I am not a fan of the expression 'the new normal' but we have continued to be resourceful and adapt well to the changing Covid 19 requirements in these difficult times. Like many places, we had to return to being closed to the public again for a while, but were then able to re-open our reception and operate with some staff in a safe office environment, and have increasingly been able to offer face to face appointments as the year has gone on. As explained in the Housing section of this report, possession cases began to be listed again and we covered the court Duty scheme to help those facing possession or eviction. We returned to seeing EU citizens at the DUWC offices in Shirebrook to help them with their applications to remain in the UK as the deadline loomed. Our Care Act advisers kept in touch with their very vulnerable clients and other caseworkers were able to do doorstep and house visits to progress cases. Our volunteers continued taking details of enquiries from home and in the office, and generally we have all got used to a different way of working. Who can say what the next year will bring?

We were funded for two trainee solicitors during the year, Matt Brown in his second year funded by The Law Society Diversity Access Scheme and Gary Steel, another Justice First Fellowship funded trainee who started on 1 January, 2021.



**Tony McIlveen**  
*Senior Solicitor*

Congratulations to Matt who qualified as a solicitor on 3 September and is now a member of the housing team. Gary previously worked for us as a Homelessness Prevention paralegal and we were all delighted that he was the successful candidate. The quality of candidates was impressive and we were able to offer a short term temporary housing adviser post to one of the other candidates, Alex Pearce. We also welcomed Luke Ridge to our housing team and Patrick Macken to our employment team, with further additions, Madison Aspinall and Kate Morgan later this year to our housing team.

It has been exciting to have some new blood and young faces at the Law Centre, even though we only get to meet in person now and then, but we also said goodbye to a few in this last year. In January Debra Parkin left us to take up a role as a Personal Navigator with St Ann's Advice, Nottingham. Romany Kisbee-Batho, an employment/immigration paralegal left us in May to work for a prestigious London firm, whilst Laura Holland left our housing team to relocate to North Yorkshire and an exciting post building up specialisms at a large Citizens Advice centre there. Joe Wilson, a homelessness prevention worker took up a new role at Chesterfield Citizens Advice in August. And of course, sadly, we said a fond but slightly tearful farewell to the evergreen Mr Steve Taylor, one of the original members of staff of the Law Centre back in 1989, who called time and decided to retire in August this year. A true champion.

Our core local authority funders have also been champions, sticking with us, understanding the difficulties we sometimes faced in delivering our services, providing extra funding for us to help families in terrible need during the last year and generally being supportive. A big thank you from all of us.

So, a year in which we achieved far more than we thought we could, sometimes less than we wanted, but I hope this report shows the ways in which we have continued to be there for people when help was most needed.

**Tony McIlveen**

# Employment Unit Report

We continue to live in challenging times and, like all staff at the Law Centre, the Employment Unit has had to embrace changes to the way we deliver our services and to the types of cases we are dealing with. We are all now adept users of 'Zoom', have brushed up on our IT skills and adapted to interviewing clients remotely as opposed to face-to-face.

## New funding

New funding through the LSLIP (Legal Support for Litigants in Person) project and 'Just In Time' project, together with South Derbyshire and core funding has allowed us to continue to deliver a high-quality service and increase staffing levels within the unit. We welcomed Patrick Macken as a new employment caseworker in late 2020 and his knowledge of employment law and considerable casework skills are already proving invaluable.

*"Patrick was amazing and very helpful throughout the whole process, can't thank him enough."*

New employment enquiries to the Law Centre remain high and as expected, many are Covid related. Over the coming months we expect to see a rise in enquiries in relation to the legitimacy (or otherwise) of insisting staff are fully vaccinated, ongoing health and safety concerns in the workplace as a result of the pandemic and the effect of the termination of the furlough scheme which may have a devastating impact on many. We shall report back in full next year!

As ever, we have dealt with a mixed bag of enquiries over the last year including discrimination, unfair dismissal, redundancy, non-payment of wages, and many Covid-related enquiries. A flavour of some of those enquiries is given; see right.

## Case studies

### David's story

David was made redundant after 15 years of service. Unfortunately, his employer's business collapsed before his redundancy payment was made and our client was left with nothing. We issued proceedings in the Employment Tribunal and after a successful hearing, were able to recover the full amount of redundancy of £7000 from the Redundancy Payments Office.

### Teresa's story:

Teresa was dismissed on the grounds of ill health from her role as a receptionist after being absent from work due to 'long-Covid'. We successfully appealed against dismissal on a number of grounds. In particular, the employer had not obtained an updated medical report, had not given proper consideration as to the likelihood of Teresa's return to work, and had not looked at alternatives, such as a phased return or reduced working hours in the short term. The employer agreed to reinstate Teresa, properly investigate her circumstances and give full consideration as to what steps could be taken to assist her return to work.

### Andy's story:

Andy was dismissed for whistleblowing. We took legal proceedings on the basis that the dismissal was unfair and were able to ultimately settle the matter for a considerable sum shortly before the final hearing in the Employment Tribunal.

### Tom's story:

Tom had been absent from work as a result of ill health for over a year. Unfortunately, his medical prognosis was that he would struggle to return to work in the foreseeable future. His employers had begun capability proceedings which would inevitably lead to dismissal. We became involved and were able to negotiate a favorable termination of employment together with a significant 'settlement' package. Due to terms of settlement, our client was able to move seamlessly to appropriate welfare benefits.

# Just in Time Project

The Just in Time project started in June 2019. It provides specialist employment advice for clients who are referred by health professionals. A rapid referral route has been set up with the aim of giving advice within 48 hours of referral. We have found that when advice is given at an early stage, issues are more likely to be resolved without the need for legal action. This saves time, reduces stress experienced by clients, and avoids conflict with employers.

With our assistance, clients are often helped to stay in employment, but where that is not possible, further advice, assistance and representation can be provided in relation to ongoing issues or legal action. As well as achieving employment outcomes including financial benefits such as continued or enhanced income, the project aims to improve health and well-being. Where there are multiple issues, clients can be referred to the Law Centre's other services - for instance, housing or debt.

## Case study - Michaela's story

*Michaela was newly qualified and working in a busy environment. Although she enjoyed her work, she began to have problems with her colleagues who bullied her, making comments about her age and work experience. They gave her menial tasks so she was unable to use her qualifications. Michaela developed work-related stress and depression. She raised the issue with her employer, but they didn't take any action to help her. Michaela lost all trust in her employer, and resigned. She was then referred to us for advice. We helped Michaela with an Employment Tribunal claim for age and disability discrimination and constructive unfair dismissal. A settlement was reached and Michaela found new employment.*

The Just in Time project has been evaluated by staff at the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University, and a copy of the report can be found on the News page of the Law Centre website. The report gathered the views of clients and other stakeholders – for example referring agencies and funders – and is very favourable.

The Just in Time project has been funded by Derbyshire Public Health and the Legal Education Foundation. We hope that further funding will enable us to continue the project, and to expand its reach so that more people can be helped to find an early solution to their legal problems in employment.

## Case study - Graham's story

*Graham had been working for his employer for 6 years. He had longstanding health issues which his employer was aware of. Graham and his manager arranged a system of working which suited him – he was able to take breaks when he needed to, and if he had to go home early or come in late he texted his manager rather than use the formal absence procedures. However, only Graham and his manager knew about this arrangement. The manager left, and Graham's new manager refused to continue the arrangement. We helped him raise a grievance, pointing out that the arrangement between Graham and his manager had been a reasonable adjustment for a disability. The employer accepted this and Graham was able to build a positive relationship with the new manager and stay in his job.*

*"I do believe the project's a life saver for me and it's certainly helped my stress levels go down because I knew I had the backing of the law then and what I thought I was entitled to, was correct." (client)*



# Legal Support for Litigants in Person (LSLIP)

**In July 2020 we were invited to submit a bid for funding under the Legal Support for Litigants in Person Grant (LSLIP), funded by the Ministry of Justice, administered by the Access to Justice Foundation.**

We were successful in our bid, which is a first in that the LSLIP project is a collaboration, and has seen us establish a new and efficient working relationship with our partners, Central England Law Centre. The relationship has given huge benefits to both partners, and continues to blossom and go from strength to strength.

As a result of the LSLIP grant:

- We were able to appoint a full-time Employment caseworker in January 2021 on a fixed term contract until June 2022.
- We were able to extend our advice, assistance and representation to cover the High Peak region of Derbyshire; an area which we had unfortunately lost funding for, despite our awareness and understanding of demand for potential serious and high risk cases within the area.
- We are now able to offer and undertake advocacy and representation on behalf of our clients in the Employment Tribunal.
- We have improved and updated resources on our website for people we cannot help directly – for instance because they live outside Derbyshire. These resources were developed under previous funding for litigants in person.

*“Once again thank you...I sincerely appreciate your input and the time spent.”*

Since 1 April 2013, Legal Aid in employment has been restricted to cases of discrimination in employment. However, thanks to the LSLIP grant, we are effectively able to turn back time and provide assistance as if there is in fact generalised all-encompassing employment law Legal Aid funding. We are able to help clients to litigate a wide range of claims that simply would not be possible without the LSLIP funding.

Previously, our funding streams were limited to 6 hours casework in ‘exceptional circumstances’, whereas we now have the funding to work without such a restriction, with the added bonus of providing advocacy and representation.

## Case study - Reece's story

*Reece had been signed off from work due to ill-health. He was paid company sick pay for 6 months. He was then informed that he was not actually entitled to company sick pay, but statutory sick pay, and was told that a deduction would be made to recover the overpayment from his wages. We issued a grievance on Reece's behalf, and the employer responded, agreeing that they would not take any action to recover the alleged overpayment from Reece's wages.*

**In the first 6 month of the project (1st October 2020 to 31st March, 2021):**



**467** clients were helped under the LSLIP funding.



**522** recorded hits on the 'Lip Service' pages on our website.



# Discrimination Unit Report

We currently hold a legal aid contract in discrimination which allows us to provide specialist advice and assistance focusing on the areas of employment, housing and access to goods and services. We have additional funding to provide basic advice and assistance for discrimination in employment for those clients who are not eligible for legal aid.

The work we carry out in the Discrimination Unit is best reflected through example case studies from the last 12 months:

## Case study - Amanda's story

*Amanda was dyslexic and referred to as 'slow' and 'incompetent' by her employer. No consideration was given as to whether Amanda would have benefitted from adaptations or reasonable adjustments within the workplace to assist her. She was prevented from undertaking key duties, as her employer believed that she was not capable of performing them due to his flawed perception of her abilities.*

*Amanda was suddenly dismissed by reason of redundancy. She was not given any prior notification that she was at risk of redundancy, she was not consulted, no alternative work was considered, and she was not given a right of appeal. We asserted that the 'real' reason for dismissal was in fact discriminatory and proceeded to issue proceedings in the Employment Tribunal. The matter ultimately proceeded to a final hearing. We provided representation and were successful in obtaining a compensatory award of £20,000.*

## Case study - Pauline's story

*Pauline worked in a shop. She had a mental health condition which her employer was aware of, and 2 young children, the youngest having just started at school. She had an arrangement to leave early on certain days to collect her children from school. When she returned after a period of sick leave, she was told that she would have to work until 5.30 every day but could start later in the mornings. It was difficult for her to arrange childcare, and anxiety about the change in hours affected her health. We started a claim for sex & disability discrimination in the Employment Tribunal which was ultimately settled. Pauline was very happy with the amount she received. She told us that the experience of taking action about the issues in her employment had improved her confidence and she has now found another job.*

## Case study - Steven's story

*Steven, a client with a disability, applied for a job. He had a fluctuating condition and on the day of the interview he was too unwell to attend. He informed the prospective employer, who said that because he could not attend the interview, his job application would not be considered. Sometime later, a similar job was advertised by the same employer. Steven was told that because of the previous non-attendance at interview, his application would not be considered. We intervened, but the employer was adamant that he could not accept the application. We took a claim to the Employment Tribunal which was subsequently settled.*

*"Andrew was fantastic. He really wanted me to win my case."*

# Housing Unit Report

**The Housing Unit has continued to be busy over the last year and although there was a ban on most evictions until 31 May, we were kept busy by some landlords who chose not to follow the correct legal procedure to evict a tenant. These cases always require emergency assistance and often an urgent application to the court to get the client back in to their home.**

Illegal evictions are time consuming for solicitors and caseworkers at the Law Centre and can be life changing for the tenants affected. We have dealt with cases where a landlord has removed and destroyed all of a client's belongings. This can be a lifetime of personal documents, photographs and other treasured, irreplaceable items.

We have continued to work with our local authorities particularly to support clients who found themselves to be homeless. Our partnership working goes from strength to strength which means we achieve the best outcomes for clients.

The Law Centre has been very actively involved with the East Midlands Civil Court Possessions Group and we have attended all the meetings chaired by the Designated Civil Judge, HHJ Godsmark. The solicitors attending represent landlords, and local authority representatives were also in attendance. This put our solicitors and caseworkers in a good position to know which landlords were actively starting to issue possession proceedings so that we could be ready and make sure we had the resources for the County Court possession days which began in October 2020.

We have now noticed an increase in new enquiries and cases and are much busier than we were. We've also noticed an increase in mortgage repossession cases and expect more with the ending of the furlough scheme.

## Chesterfield County Court Duty Scheme

We have operated the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme at Chesterfield County Court since it started in 2005. This service is funded by the Legal Aid Agency and supported by funding from Local Authorities. The Duty Scheme ensures that an experienced housing adviser is present at Court on every day when possession (eviction) claims are due to be heard.

For many of the clients we meet at Court this will be the first time they have received advice on their circumstances. Lack of money, vulnerabilities or simply not knowing where to turn often prevents tenants and mortgage borrowers from seeking advice until the day of their hearing. This is what makes the emergency advice and representation service we provide so important. Representation in Court can be provided to anyone facing eviction from their home regardless of their financial resources or circumstances. Often contact at Court is the first step in the client's journey to receiving wrap-around advice and support from housing advisers and other services within the Law Centre.

The pandemic has continued to affect the way in which cases are heard at Court but Derbyshire Law Centre has adapted to meet the challenge. An adviser continues to attend Court for all Substantive (in-person) listings in addition to Review sessions when Defendants may not speak to the Judge, but can receive expert advice on their case.

### Attended:

- 20 Substantive in-person listings
- 18 Review listings

## Homelessness Reduction Act

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) Project is now in its third year providing specialist support to prevent and alleviate homelessness for the residents of North East Derbyshire, Bolsover and Chesterfield. The project funds a full-time homelessness prevention paralegal and accepts referrals for those at risk of homelessness from local authorities, housing associations and other support services. Being a paralegal led project, Derbyshire Law Centre are able to offer wrap-around support to clients to work to resolve legal, as well as practical, issues affecting them.

As the region continues to grapple with the impacts of the pandemic, generous increases in grants and funding from local authorities enables us to get help quickly to those most in need. This year grants have been secured for clients to pay for deposits to access new accommodation, for essential furniture and white goods, for moving costs as well as providing one-off emergency welfare grants to pay for food and clothing for those in crisis.

Much of the work on the project revolves around preventing homelessness by either supporting clients to remain in their home, or ensuring new accommodation is available for those facing eviction.

## Case study - a family in need's story

*A family approached us for help. They were facing eviction by a private landlord for rent arrears which had accrued due to difficulties with their claim for Universal Credit. We secured funds of over £1,000 to ensure deposits were paid for new private rented accommodation for this family of five. We were also able to fund a moving van, new furniture and essential white goods. The family were also supported to budget effectively in their new home.*



**Clients Assisted = 60**

**BDC = 9   CBC = 23   NEDDC = 28**



**Financial Gains = £34,160**



**Homelessness Prevention = 35**

**BDC = 8   CBC = 15   NEDDC = 12**

*"I wouldn't have known what to do if it hadn't been for Luke"*

## Homelessness Prevention Project

In June 2020, following the success of our Private Rented Sector Project, we launched the Homelessness Prevention Project. We are delighted that the project has been extended again, thanks to continued funding from Amber Valley Borough Council, Bolsover District Council, Chesterfield Borough Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council. This year has seen the project grow with additional funding from High Peak.

The project enables us to provide support to tenants, both in private rented properties and social housing who are facing homelessness or are having difficulties paying their rent. We can also signpost clients to other services provided by the Law Centre or other agencies.

## Case study - Joe's story

*Joe initially contacted the Law Centre in July 2020 via Amber Valley Borough Council. Joe was renting a room off a live-in landlord but he was asked to leave the property as the landlord was concerned about Covid due to the fact that Joe was working.*

*Joe initially moved in with his girlfriend but this was at her mother's house which wasn't ideal and when the relationship ended he had to move out. We lost contact with Joe for a while but in March 2021 he re-contacted the Law Centre saying that he was renting a room but had been asked to move out. Subsequently Joe discovered that the person he had been paying rent to did not own the property and that the actual landlord had found out that he was living there. He wanted advice on his legal rights. Having sought advice from our housing solicitors we were able to inform Joe that he did not have any rights regarding his current situation.*

*But we were able to offer Joe help to find suitable affordable accommodation and a few days later he informed us that he had found a room.*





## Amber Valley Caseworker Project

With funding from Amber Valley Council, the Law Centre is able to dedicate a full-time housing caseworker to provide legal and practical housing advice to residents of Amber Valley. By ensuring a dedicated caseworker is provided, the Law Centre is able to work with greater efficiency for the benefit of residents by employing local knowledge and forging relationships with local authority departments.

Whilst it has not been possible to see many clients face-to-face during the pandemic, the Law Centre has maintained a continual service via telephone, post and video call. Where necessary, home visits have been possible to support our most vulnerable clients to ensure no resident is left behind.

Legal advice, support and representation is provided to those clients eligible for legal aid funding of their case for housing issues including eviction, homelessness, disrepair, unlawful eviction and harassment. Numerous evictions have been prevented or significantly delayed through legal representation to defend claims before the courts. By providing early advice, coupled with referrals for homelessness prevention support, the Law Centre is able to resolve issues such as rent arrears well before a threat of homelessness begins.

The project also allows us to work closely with residents to make and manage homelessness applications. By working closely with Amber Valley Borough Council we are able to help clients collect evidence and present their circumstances in the clearest way. In rare cases where an aspect of an application might become subject to challenge; we are able to resolve issues quickly without unnecessary recourse to legal measures. By working together, the Law Centre and Amber Valley Borough Council are able to secure the best possible outcome for residents.

### Case study - Fiona and Jake's story

*Fiona and Jake, a couple living in Amber Valley were facing eviction for rent arrears. It was identified that they had long suffered with disrepair in their privately rented home after the Landlord refused to keep the property in a habitable condition. After arranging for a property surveyor to complete a report; we were able to successfully issue a Counterclaim to write-off the arrears. This secured Fiona and Jake extra time in the property as well as allowing them access to Home Choice, the local housing register, to bid for alternative accommodation.*



*"Alex was understanding and made me feel important and the whole situation important."*

# Debt Unit Report

The Law Centre continues to offer free, impartial, specialist advice to anyone in debt, whatever their income or circumstances. Working effectively between September 2020 and August 2021 continued to be a challenge, trying to meet the needs of clients often facing urgent and difficult problems, but without being able to see them in person. We built on the skills we had already learnt over the course of the first lockdown, and are confident that we were able to respond quickly and effectively by phone, email and text to many emergency situations. Since returning to face to face appointments in July, we have had a steady stream of people wanting to access this service, as many people in debt find it easier to come in and talk to us in person. Since July, debt advisers Sue and Sally have been joined by Gary Steel, a trainee solicitor with Derbyshire Law Centre.

A major development in May this year was the introduction of Breathing Space. Breathing Space is a government scheme that puts a mandatory 60-day hold on all debt collection activity, from catalogue debt and bailiffs collecting council tax, to evictions based on rent or mortgage arrears. The scheme is administered by the Insolvency Service, and our debt advisors have made good use of it. Breathing Space gives people in emergency situations an immediate hold on court/collection activity, and time to either make a further court application, or consider a more long term debt solution.

Since the end of the eviction ban, we have seen an increase in people struggling to pay their mortgage, whether because they have lost their job through Covid, or been ill and unable to work at all. This is coupled with many people coming to the end of an interest only mortgage started many years ago, but now with no way to pay it off, and potentially facing the loss of their family home. The Law Centre's specialism in housing related debt means we can offer quality advice to home owners facing the loss of their home, often in circumstances they could never have envisaged a couple of years ago.

Our debt advice provision is part of a wider team within the Law Centre, including housing specialists, homeless prevention projects, and the Money Sorted budgeting project, who all work together to make sure everyone who asks us for help gets a holistic service. We work hard to try and make sure everyone who needs our help gets that help. Our joint working approach is key to being able to make a difference to people's lives, sometimes in a small way, such as helping someone speak to their creditors to get time to put a payment plan together, or a more major 're-set', helping people write their debt off and start afresh. This can have a massive impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

## Case Study - Steven's story

*Steven phoned us in a panic, as he had received an official and frightening Notice of Enforcement from High Court Enforcement Agents. They were threatening to attend his property the following week to remove his belongings, due to water arrears which he had ignored, resulting in a county court judgement being made against him, and then registered in the high court. Steven was retired, and getting pension credit plus his retirement pension. We were able to make an immediate Breathing Space application for him, which stopped the bailiffs from being able to attend his property, and gave us time to help Steven make an application to the court and pay at an affordable rate.*



**615** participants supported  
67% increase on last year

*"I've only managed to get through it all with your help and I am now looking forward to the future for the first time in a long time. Thank you so much."*

# Immigration Unit Report

**This year the Immigration Unit has been very busy helping EU citizens and their families living in the area to apply for leave to remain in the UK post Brexit. We had previously been part of a national Law Centre Network project to support vulnerable people with complex cases. In October last year we were part of a successful bid, led by Nottingham Law Centre, to support vulnerable EU citizens and their families across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, as well as the two cities. We are responsible for Derbyshire and Derby City, working in partnership with St James Centre in Derby City. We have also dovetailed our project with the work of Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre supporting Polish and other EU citizens in Shirebrook and North Nottinghamshire.**

It has not been easy running the project in a pandemic as we usually need to see clients face to face in order to complete their applications. As yet, no one that we have supported has had their case refused, but we are well aware that as the scheme ended on 30th June 2021, amidst a panic of last minute applications which are still being processed, there are still an awful lot of 'pending' cases which may fall to be refused. The Home Office reported that it was receiving over 10,000 applications a day in the last few weeks of the scheme. Worryingly, some groups continue not to be aware of the need to apply. For instance, only 2% of the total EUSS applications are from people over 65, many of whom have probably lived in the UK for decades. Everyone wants to avoid another Windrush situation.

At the time of going to press, the good news is firstly that the Home Office continues to accept late applications and is taking a pragmatic approach to getting everyone legally resident and secondly, it looks as if the Home Office is extending our funding to continue our work until March 2022.

The last year has also seen our immigration team very busy on the telephone giving detailed advice and continuing to submit applications for people during lockdown. Our project to help people with difficult Human Rights based applications who cannot afford to get legal advice came to an end in April 2021. It was funded by the AB Charitable Trust for 1 year and proved a lifeline, particularly to women who had fled domestic abuse, often with children, with no recourse to public funds. We are keen to continue this important work.

We welcomed Beth Holt full time to the immigration unit in April 2021 to help cope with the increasing caseload. The looming EUSS deadline resulted in Beth undertaking home visits in Derby on numerous occasions to see vulnerable individuals, particularly children, to assist them in making their applications; on her busiest day Beth saw more than 20 people in their homes.

Sadly, we also said goodbye to Romany Kisbee-Batho, who was an employment/immigration paralegal. Romany did well to pass her Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) level 1 exam, enabling her to give immigration advice, before leaving to take up a new post in London.

***"I would just like to pass on my thanks to Beth and all her colleagues - all were a great help to me."***



## Case study - Lucy's story

Lucy came to the UK as a student at Sheffield University in 2000. Unfortunately, on completion of her degree, she swapped courses to one that did not meet visa requirements and so an application for an extension of her leave was refused. She was unaware of the decision at first and so she became an over-stayer and lost her place on her course. She tried to regularise her stay as soon as she found out, but was now very anxious. She had to report to the police and yet she heard nothing about her case from the Home Office. She then met her fiancé in Derbyshire and they started a family together.

We first became involved in Lucy's case in 2008 as she was still waiting to hear from the Home Office on her earlier application. She had been refused permission by the Home Office to marry her partner. We submitted a new application to the Home Office for her and made detailed representations on her behalf based on her family life in the UK. This was finally granted in 2010 and she and her partner were finally able to marry. Lucy had suffered severe post-natal depression and her health was increasingly in crisis but she managed to continue to work and support her family. We did not act for her, but the Home Office lost her next application for further leave in 2013, which was eventually granted over a year later. The stress and uncertainty of her immigration status was impacting Lucy's health. In 2016, we were not in a position to take on immigration casework and as Lucy could not afford a solicitor, she submitted her own application for settlement, trying to explain her family situation, which had become complicated due to Lucy's ill health.

The Home Office rejected the application and instead granted her yet more limited leave, this time until 2020. Lucy was very upset by the decision but did not challenge it. She continued working during the pandemic but was panicking as to what application she would now have to make and so applied for the automatic 1 year extension

available to key health workers at the time. We were in contact with Lucy after this and advised that she waited for the outcome of her extension application. She waited months without a response from the Home Office, and so in early 2021 we made a Subject Access Request to find out what had gone wrong with her previous application and what her current status was. When we got the file details, we could tell that she had now lived lawfully in the UK for 10 years, her previous application was probably refused in error and that the Home Office had lost her extension application as a health worker. We had funding from the AB Charitable Trust to support people with precarious immigration status and so we were able to submit a full application and all the necessary supporting evidence for settlement based on 10 years' lawful residence in the UK. Thankfully, it was granted in fairly quick time and so Lucy's journey was finally over and she could feel secure in the UK.

*"Thank you very much for emailing, it's brilliant news that I have been granted indefinite leave to remain. I was pleased that the application been successful. Moreover, I could inform my employer my legal status now. After few hours knowing that I finally got the visa, I started feeling settled and happy, takes while to believe all these years worries and anxiety and stress suddenly came to an end. And I feel relieved that I can start a new chapter of life. I feel ever so grateful for your kindness and professional help. Thank you so much for your brilliant efficiency and truly amazing professionalism."*

# Other Projects

We continue to work on projects and funding applications to expand the numbers of people that we can assist and to retain existing services. Recognition that some of our clients would benefit from additional support in addition to the support they get from case workers is at the heart of our projects. Despite lockdowns we are proud that we have continued to be able to support clients through the following projects:

## Money Sorted in D2N2

This year 'Money Sorted' has embraced hybrid-working to assist participants with budgeting and financial capability, enabling them to function effectively through lockdown fluctuations. We continue to support individuals who find themselves socially isolated and digitally excluded, with limited or no income, and heightened mental health conditions exasperated by the after effects of Covid-19. This often requires a navigator to read between the lines and support the participant to piece the 'jigsaw puzzle' of their life together –providing wrap around holistic support to enable them to make positive steps towards training or employment, whilst addressing the fundamentals of budgeting and financial capability.

'Money Sorted' is one of 3 strands of the Building Better Opportunities programme (the others being 'Opportunity & Change' and 'Towards Work') and funding has been secured until June 2023 for 'Money Sorted'.

A new development in 2021 sees 'Money Sorted' working in partnership with 'Clean Sheet', an organisation that support ex-offenders into work, thus breaking down barriers into employment and having the means to create a better lifestyle.

In January 2021 we said goodbye to one navigator as they relocated to Nottingham and we now support people in Chesterfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire. 'Money Sorted' can offer a wide range of holistic support and we are happy to 'hand hold' and guide clients through challenging financial times.



**53 participants supported**

## Case study - 'Forgotten young people'

Knowledge of Kallum came about when carrying out a budget plan for Kallum's parents at the beginning of 2021. Kallum is a 24yr old adult living at home with no income. He was economically inactive and living on no funds. He was socially isolated and his father didn't approve of him paying 'board' or claiming benefits. Kallum was having a tough time with anxiety and mental health issues; he did not leave the house, and in the past had given up when trying to action things himself.

'Money Sorted' assisted Kallum to access Universal Credit remotely, combat issues with Government Gateway and ID, breaking down barriers to accessing income and becoming financially independent. From there he gained the courage to engage with 'Youth Employability Coaches' at DWP who are specially trained to support young jobseekers facing significant barriers to get on the first rung of the jobs ladder.

Although Kallum lived at home with his parents, 'Money Sorted' showed him the difference between priority and non-priority payments. He formulated his own budget plan and began to do his own online grocery shopping, he also insisted on paying 'board' to his parents, which in turn helped their financial circumstances.

The confidence of Kallum increased, and although he still suffers with anxiety he is having more contact with the outside world, looking towards opportunities at The Princes' Trust and is beginning to envisage himself in an outside world.

*"Money Sorted helped me to get back on my feet and become financially independent."*

# Derbyshire One-to-One Bilingual Crisis Buddy Service

This successful partnership project which involved 5 partners (Derby Law Centre, Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre, LINKS, St James and Community Action Derby) working together came to an end in May 2021. Even with the impact of the pandemic there was a continued demand for the service. The experience and statistical information has contributed to at least one partner securing funding for a project aimed at supporting people who are Eastern Europeans and another is working on another project. Derbyshire Law Centre are or will be part of both the new projects.

The following figures are for the Shire aspect of the project only.

- 182 beneficiaries over the 5 years
- Of those 155 (85%) of the beneficiaries were Polish
- 41% of beneficiaries had at least two or more appointments
- 65% of beneficiaries had more than 1 issue

## Numbers per specialism

- Housing = 20
- Debt = 63
- Immigration = 8
- Employment = 20
- Benefits = 125



*"I found both of the ladies very supportive and compassionate and kind and so helpful."*

# Opportunity and Change

This is an employment-related support project for people facing severe and multiple disadvantage. It is delivered by a partnership of community-based organisations across Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. The project is part of the Building Better Opportunities Programme (BBO) which is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and The National Lottery Community Fund. The project is led by Framework and is worked on by our registered Social Worker, Mollie Roe and our Advocate, at Derbyshire Law Centre to offer support to individuals with multiple complex help needs to access universal or social care services in Derby and Derbyshire, and to open up their pathway to work, education or training. From the 1st September 2020 - 31 August 2021 the team supported 50 participants that were referred from partner organisations with identified support needs.



**25 participants supported**  
**25% increase on last year**

## Case study - Julie's story

*Julie had numerous physical and mental health ailments and due to Covid-19 had an overwhelming fear of people entering her home. Mollie and our Advocate took her case on during Covid-19 lockdown and during her assessment with Mollie it was decided that carers would be the best option for her. Due to Covid restrictions our Advocate regularly called Julie to ensure she felt supported and email emotional support was provided, even on non-working days. Mollie referred Julie into Adult Social Care. Our Advocate then negotiated with the team to ensure the correct process was followed, the individuals were regularly tested for Covid-19 and that Julie had full control of the visits. Julie is now awaiting a final assessment and care plan. She received a full person-centred assessment and advocacy service and will now go on to receive the support she requested and requires.*



# Volunteers and Work Placements

Nationally and locally, the pandemic and three lockdowns have generally had a positive impact on volunteering, as people came together to help and support those on the front line or within their communities. For many volunteers, this was physical support often associated with food and prescription deliveries. What proved to be more difficult was the continuation of volunteering in advice services, especially where face to face contact or ICT equipment was required.

For the Law Centre it took time to secure funding to purchase laptops and other equipment required by volunteers. With the equipment finally in place a protocol for remote supervision was introduced and refresher training was developed and delivered. Unfortunately, by the time everything was in place, like many other people, Isabel, one of our volunteers had taken this time to re-evaluate her life and had decided not to return.

Currently we have Nancy volunteering remotely twice a week; for 8 hours. Tim for personal reasons is yet to return but stays in regular contact. Both are invited and attend staff events when available and continue to be a valuable resource for the organisation.

We are reassessing how we can adapt the assessment role to meet the needs of remote working, but we are also working on new volunteering opportunities, so watch this space.

Lockdowns continue to have a huge impact on student placements. Due to hybrid working we have been unable to commit to any student placements this year. We hope this will change in the next 12 months as we all adapt to the 'new normal'.

*"It's such a relief to be back contributing to the work of the Law Centre again. It was hard to sit on the side lines whilst there was so much to be done. I didn't know how home working would suit but I love it! I can really concentrate on our clients and the technology provided is easy to use and works well."*

*Nancy, current volunteer*



# View from a Trainee Solicitor

## Gary Steel

*Trainee Solicitor – funded by The Legal Education Foundation.*

**I started working at the Law Centre in 2018 as a Homelessness Prevention Paralegal, working on the Homelessness Reduction Act project (HRA). In January 2021, I started my training contact and time as a Legal Education Foundation Justice First Fellow. My first “seat” was in Employment Law. I did not have any experience of Employment Law, it was all new to me, and was like I was starting at day one in the Law Centre.**

Thanks to the brilliant supervision, patience and guidance of the Employment Unit as a whole, I soon got to grips with the variety of different issues the Employment Unit face on a day to day basis. I dealt with pay disputes, unfair dismissal and constructive dismissal through telephone appointments and also call backs – I did not have any face to face interaction with clients due to the Covid-19 restrictions and the national lockdown. However I do not feel that this restricted the advice or representation that I was able to provide.



My proudest moment in the Employment Unit was helping a young man who had been told he was an apprentice and paid as an apprentice, but who on a true construction of his contract was in fact an employee and was owed a substantial amount of back pay. After my involvement and application of the law, with supervision from the rest of the Unit, the employer backed down and paid my client what he was owed.

In July 2021 I moved into the Debt Unit helping and advising clients on issues such as the most appropriate debt option for them, how to dispute a debt at Court and how to deal with mortgage arrears and re-possession. The work is interesting and vast and I am learning so much from the Debt Unit advisors, Sue Allard and Sally Preece.

I will move into the Housing Unit in January 2022.

A part of the Justice First Fellowship is to develop, plan and launch a project that will promote access to justice. My project is a pathway for those who do not have recourse to public funds (focusing on victims of domestic violence), or where it requires clarification, to access free immigration, housing and homelessness prevention and family law advice (through a partnership with other services). I am still in the planning stage of the project but I hope to have a pilot up and running at the start of next year.

It has been a challenge undertaking my training contact during the pandemic. The majority of the normal supervision practices have had to end and I have had to become much more self-sufficient which has made me more confident in my choices, advice and representation. However, the supervision that I have received and I am receiving has been brilliant. I have always felt supported. There is no better place to train to be a legal aid social welfare solicitor than at a Law Centre, especially Derbyshire Law Centre.

# Financial Review of the Year

Of first concern this year has been the effect of the Covid 19 epidemic on staff, their morale, the clients' accessibility to the service and the associated costs to adapt the service to Covid 19 secure premises and homeworking. That we managed to work so effectively for our clients, speaks highly for the workers who put in so much under very trying circumstances.

In spite of a drop in the level of legally aided work (Covid 19 again), we managed our most successful year ever financially. The surplus of £118,130 allowed us to rebuild our reserves to a safer level thus satisfying both the Finance Sub-Committee and the auditors. We have also been able to invest in today's level of Information Technology making us future proof for some years to come. Full details of the accounts are available in the separate financial statements document so I will not elaborate here.

As always, this is not possible without our committed funders. With core grants (and also project funds) from Bolsover District Council, Chesterfield Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council and North East Derbyshire District Councils, we were able to raise other funds through grants and contracts.

**Alan Crow, Treasurer**

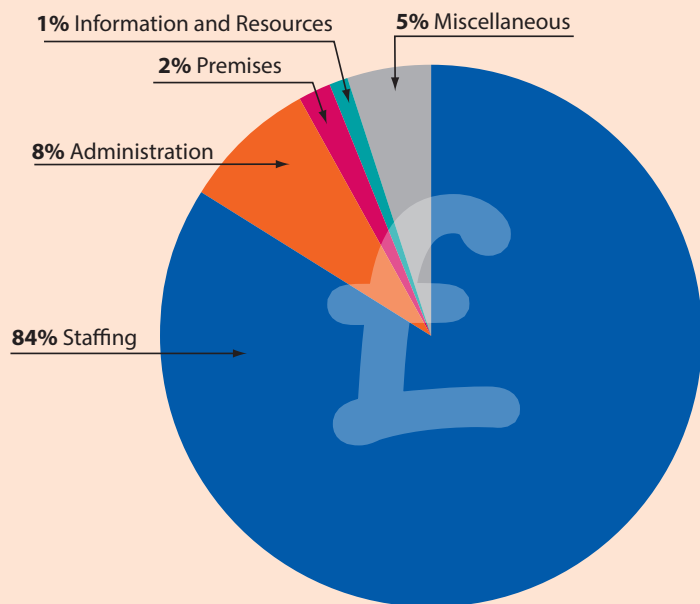
## Thanks also to:

- AB Charitable Trust
- Access To Justice Foundation
- Alex Ferry Foundation
- Amber Valley Borough Council
- Charities Aid Foundation
- Derbyshire Dales District Council
- Derbyshire Public Health (Chesterfield Health and Wellbeing)
- European Union
- High Peak Borough Council
- Legal Aid Agency
- Legal Education Foundation
- Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Money Advice and Pensions Service
- Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government
- Ministry of Justice, via Law Centres Network
- The Home Office, via Law Centres Network and Nottingham Law Centre
- The Law Society
- The National Lottery Community Fund, via DUWC and DHA.





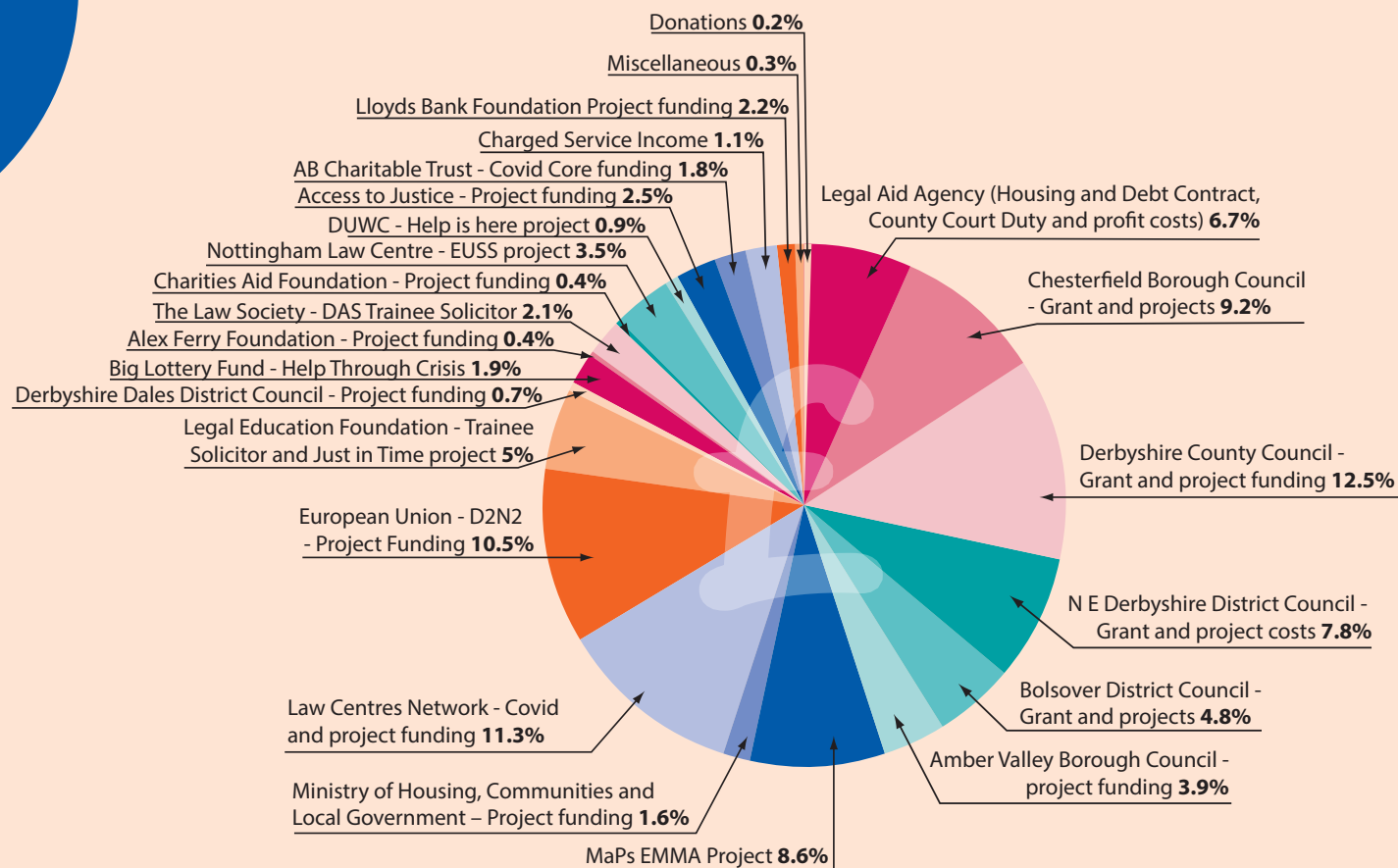
# How we spend our money



We are also reliant upon donations.  
Donations are accepted through our Facebook page.  
Gift-Aiding increases the value of donations.

For full information on our 2020/2021 accounts,  
please see our website [www.derbyshirelawcentre.org.uk/about-us](http://www.derbyshirelawcentre.org.uk/about-us)  
where you will find a full copy of the audited accounts.

## Total Income 2020/2021



# Our People and Culture

Last year, as a result of Covid and the realisation of the impact of this on staff, we realised that, although Derbyshire Law Centre is built on an unrelenting ambition to increase access to justice and help those most in need, communicated in our mission statement, there is a need for that ambition to be harnessed to a culture of kindness, respect and support for staff and volunteers. We are committed to creating a safe and respectful working environment where all staff and volunteers feel valued, where they recognise each other's contributions, where they know that inappropriate behaviour won't be tolerated and where they feel safe and supported.

Our commitment to these aspirations is reflected in our newly created core values, co-created with staff, which guide us. These are:

## Respect

To treat everyone with integrity and respect. To value and respect each other's expertise and diversity. To take responsibility for what we do and support each other to succeed.

## Create

To respond to changing needs. To be innovative and resourceful.

## Collaborate

To collaborate internally and externally. To listen and share. To work as a team using all of our expertise and skills together to get the best outcomes.

## Care

To show that we care. To promote personal wellbeing for everyone – our staff, volunteers and clients. To adopt safe and healthy working practices.

Like many other charities and organisations, this year has been extremely difficult for us, as we worked hard to manage the impact of Covid-19 on our organisation and clients. Our staff showed incredible commitment and resilience to keep delivering the service for our clients, while managing significant personal and professional challenges.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within all our policies, practices and procedures. The equality, diversity and inclusion working group is now meeting regularly and has started to look at how we make further improvements including improving accessibility to our services. We have committed to, and secured annual training this year for all staff, volunteers and trustees.

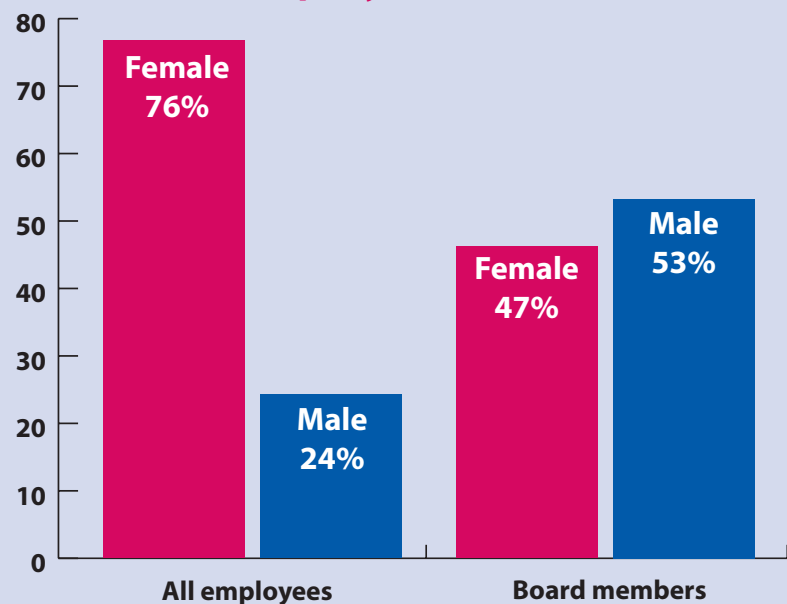
## Wellbeing

The pandemic and subsequent changes to how we work have made us think more about the wellbeing of staff. We already had a good support system in place for staff but have been fortunate to be able to offer external support, thanks to the LCN (Law Centres Network) who realised the difficulties faced by staff during the pandemic. In addition we have held virtual coffee mornings and zoom quizzes and have already started to create a wellbeing policy to ensure that this continues to be a priority for the organisation as we adapt to the new normal.

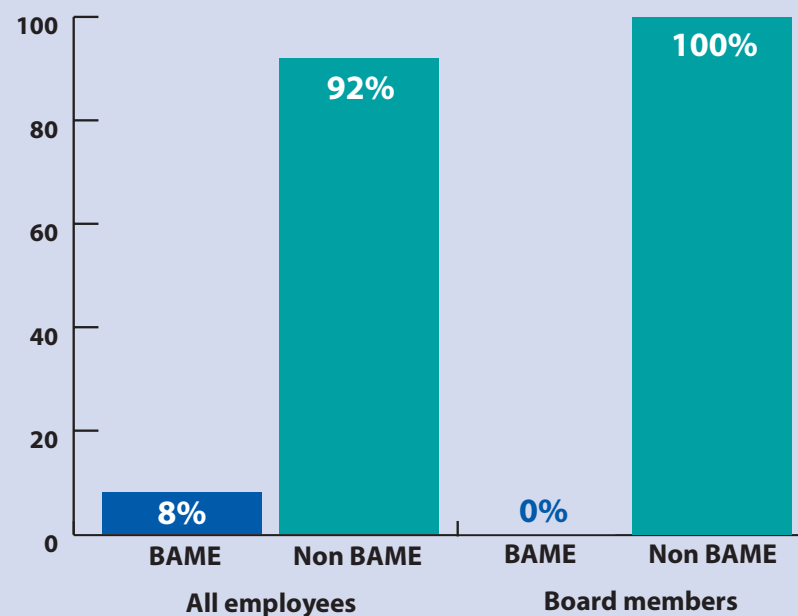
We are proud to retain 'Disability Confident Employer' accreditation.



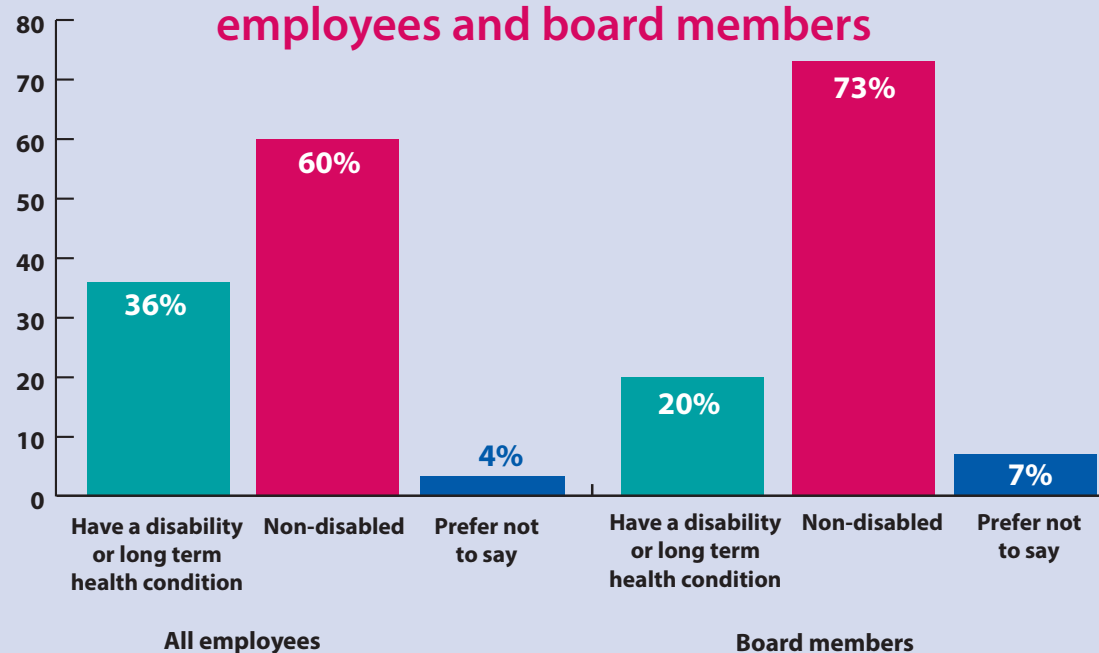
## Gender of employees and board members



## Ethnicity of employees and board members



## Disability or long term health condition of employees and board members



### Age ranges of our employees

under 25 yrs	=	12%
26 - 35yrs	=	16%
36 - 45yrs	=	12%
46 - 55yrs	=	32%
56 - 65yrs	=	28%
Over 65yrs	=	0%

### Age ranges of the Board

under 25 yrs	=	0%
26 - 35yrs	=	7%
36 - 45yrs	=	0%
46 - 55yrs	=	13%
56 - 65yrs	=	13%
Over 65yrs	=	67%



# Our Performance

## Enquiries

Number of enquiries advised on during 1.9.2020 - 31.8.2021

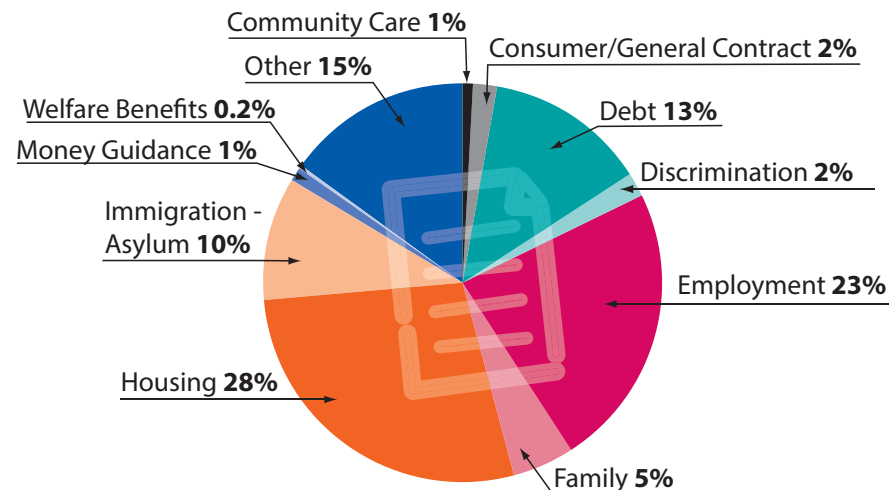
= **4931** Up by 9% from last year

## Cases

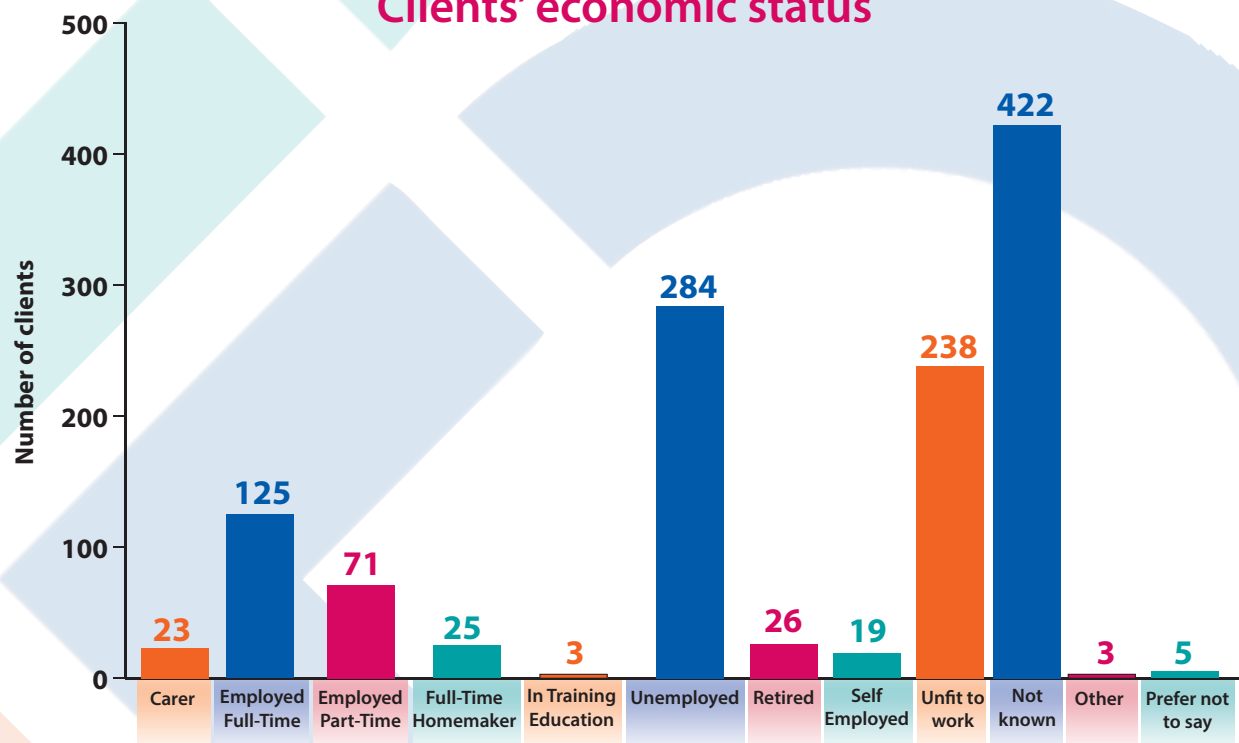
Number of cases opened during 1.9.2020 - 31.8.2021

= **1244** Up by 13% from last year

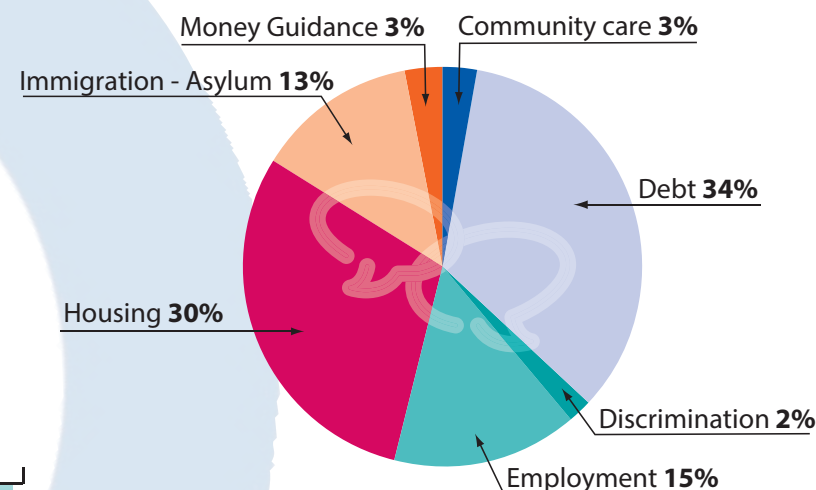
## Type of enquiries



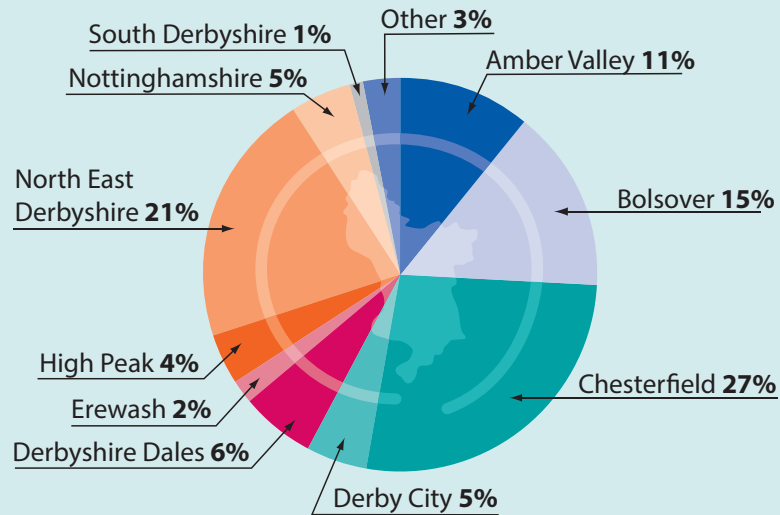
## Clients' economic status



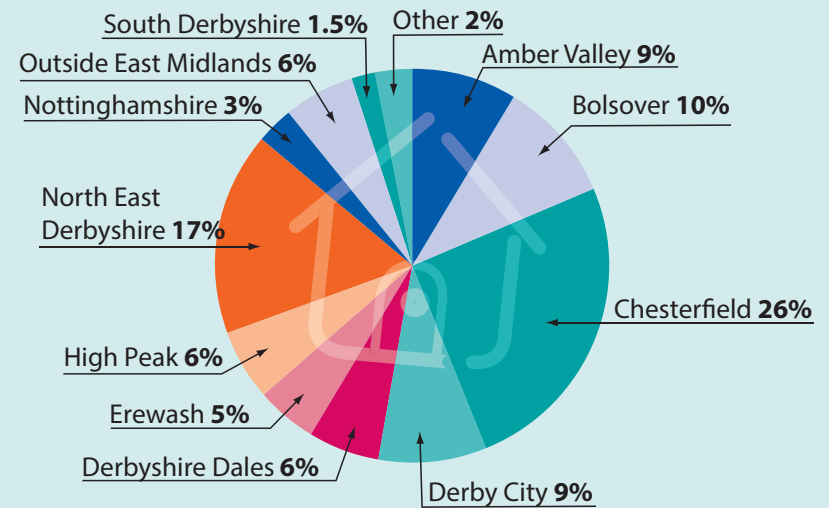
## Type of cases



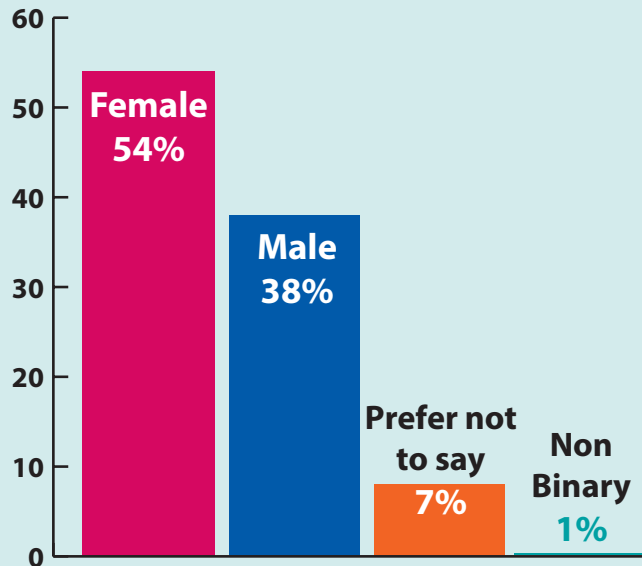
## Where do clients live?



## Where do our callers live?



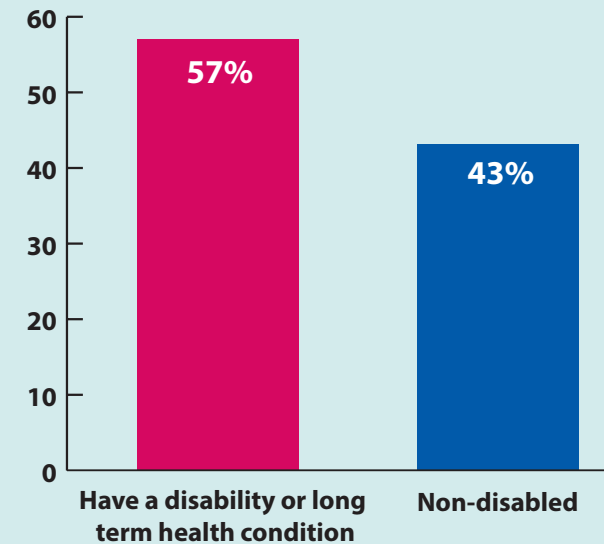
## Gender of our clients



### Age ranges of our clients

under 24 yrs	=	13%
25 -34yrs	=	21%
35 – 49yrs	=	32%
50 – 64yrs	=	25%
Over 65+yrs	=	4%
Prefer not to say	=	5%

## Disability or long term health condition of our clients



# Client Feedback

## Feedback

We value the feedback we receive from our clients. It is reported to our Management Committee quarterly. Of the 977 feedback questionnaires sent to clients, 71 (7.3%) were returned. 97% of those returned gave positive feedback. We are now collecting client feedback electronically. On initial review this approach appears to have slightly increased the number of responses.

## Complaints

We received 2 complaints between April 2020 to March 2021. Both complaints were related to the Law Centre not advising or taking on the work. On investigation it was found that both enquiries had been assessed appropriately and that the decision not to assist was based on, or a combination of the following reasons; client residing outside of the geographical area for the funding, the Law Centre not specialising in the area law required or the person not providing enough information for an assessment to be made.

## Google Reviews

We received 6 reviews.

Overall we are rated at 4.2 stars. ★★★★★

A response was provided to each negative review/comment received.

## Gift and donations

This is the first year that staff have not received any 'Thank You' gifts, which has been put down to the office being closed rather than clients not being grateful for the support they have received. However, this year has seen a large increase in donations to the Law Centre and we have received a number of large ones, including one in four figures.

Thank you to all that have donated financially or sent cards, it is really appreciated by all the staff, volunteers and trustees.

*"Very polite, professional service all round."*

*"Very good service, polite people and well impressed with service."*

*"Thank you for your support. I feel better in myself and my mental health as improved."*

*"I can't thank you enough for your help and support."*

*"All in all, made me feel I wasn't on my own, and there is help out there."*

*"Got so much more from this service than I would have thought possible."*

*"Exceptional service. I am very grateful to everyone who has helped me - Thank you."*

*"Without the help and advice from the adviser I wouldn't have been confident to deal with issues on my own."*

*"Made me feel important. This service has been a great help to me and others priceless - thank you."*

*"I am truly grateful for your help. I would highly recommend your company to anyone needing help like I did."*



# Other achievements

## A fond farewell to Steve Taylor

31 years after joining Chesterfield Law Centre, Steve Taylor has taken early retirement.

Staff, volunteers, and trustees past and present would like to say a huge thank you to Steve for all he has contributed to the Law Centre during the last 31 years.

Steve joined a team of another two staff members: Clare Lodder (Coordinator) and Jane Petrie (Housing Solicitor) and was later joined by Russ de Haney who specialised in employment and immigration law. Those were the heady days of the miners' strikes, a time when Steve assisted many families who were at risk of being evicted due to no wages being paid.

During his career at the Law Centre, Steve became well known for his passionate focus and determination in asserting the housing rights of his clients. He was particularly unafraid of challenging public bodies and became well known to our local housing authorities.



Steve Taylor, at the office on his last working day.

Steve is also known within the organisation to be a Legal Help specialist – dropping everything to advise homeless people living on the streets and young people being turfed out by their families. He would take them on, as he did with other cases, do the essential work required, thus staving off evictions for countless families

across Derbyshire. He has certainly kept many families together by ensuring they had a roof over their heads.

He also specialised in community care law for a while, assisting many disabled people, advising them of their rights and reintegrating them into the community from care homes.

Steve has been a dedicated worker and fantastic colleague to so many staff and volunteers over the last 31 years. His dedication and hard work has made a huge difference to the lives of so many Derbyshire residents. Steve is pretty amazing, and kind, and will be sorely missed by everyone.

All the very best Steve and thank you for all you've done. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the Law Centre and everything it stands for.

## Presidency for Lisa

Earlier this year our housing and discrimination solicitor, Lisa Haythorne, was re-elected as President of The Sheffield and District Law Society for a second term. She is delighted to have been given the opportunity to continue her Presidency and to continue to work with not only high street firms, but also firms that still provide legal aid work, which she feels can be a forgotten part of the profession.



Lisa Haythorne, President of Sheffield and District Society 2021-2022

## Lisa's chosen charity 2021- 2022

This year The Sheffield and District Law Society will be raising funds money to support The Elm Foundation (registered charity no 1007317) which supports women, children and men who are affected by domestic abuse. The charity is based in Chesterfield and works throughout Derbyshire to prevent domestic abuse and to provide support and protect those who experience it. They are a port of call for anyone who is living in fear of a family member or partner/ ex-partner – they listen, they advise, and they can offer safe refuge. The charity believes everyone should have freedom from domestic abuse. No-one, no child, family or person, should live in fear of a family member or partner/ex-partner.

## Yorkshire Legal Walk

On 24 June a team from Derbyshire Law Centre completed The Yorkshire Legal Walk, raising a total of £608. It was the biggest year for participants! The walk started down at the courts with staggered start times for teams due to Covid restrictions and ended at OHM where there was a glass of Prosecco provided, sponsored by Arena Group.

The money raised will go to the Access to Justice Foundation that distributes funds to improve people's access to social justice and will make a huge difference.



Team Derbyshire Law Centre at the end of the walk

## Assisting deaf people to access our legal services during the pandemic

As part of our ongoing commitment to working with deaf people we have improved our website and set up clinics, improving accessibility for this group of people.

Staff at Derbyshire Law Centre realised that deaf people particularly BSL signers were having difficulties in accessing telephony based services. In response to this need we have created 6 BSL videos on our website. These give detail on how to access each specialist area of law service.

*"The videos are informative and useful for deaf people to be aware of Derbyshire Law Centre's services. This will help them to be more included in society and help them to resolve their problems independently with the support from a sign language interpreter."*

**Sarah Tupling, Chairperson, Deaf-initely Women**

## Deaf BSL clinic

In response to the growing need for deaf people to access advice services, we have created BSL appointment slots. We continue to work with a local BSL interpreting charity: Communication Unlimited where we connect digitally via zoom to access their interpreting services.

We can now see deaf people in one of our interview rooms, in person or via Zoom, accompanied (but separately) with a sign language interpreter and a advisor. In the interview room there is a large TV screen connected to the laptop where the advisor can see /hear the interpreter. This provides a very flexible service for deaf people in deciding whether to come into the office or via Zoom.



Matt and Joe at the BSL Clinic

*"This is a brilliant service. I used this to advise one of the deaf clients that I support. It is very flexible as it gave my client and I the choice on how to access the service."*

**Thank you Nikki, Matt and Joe.**  
**Agnieszka Latif, support worker**

# Thank you to our Trustees

Our board of Trustees, known as our Management Committee have continued to meet via Zoom and it has been another busy year. We have seen changes to our board with the loss of Cllr John Boulton and Cllr Angelique Foster, following the County Council elections in May. We would like to thank John and Angelique for all their support. In July we welcomed their replacements, Cllr Philip Rose and Cllr Jack Woolley.

We have also elected a new Chair, Cllr Jenny Flood and Vice Chair, Rob Busby, following the resignation of Michael Gordon as Chair of the committee in June. Michael was Chair of Derbyshire Law Centre since the AGM in November 2019 but held the position of Chair previously in 2009-10, Vice-Chair in 2012, Chair in 13/14 to Nov 17. Thank you to Michael for the time he has given to the Management Committee and to the work of DLC. Michael's patience, expertise, dedication and continued support for all staff and volunteers has made a real difference. Thanks also to Michael for his help enabling us to secure the initial funding from BDC and AVBC.

We also said goodbye to Chris Collard and welcomed Sasha Lawrence, a newly co-opted member.

This year's calendar of meetings has included a full review of governance and we have begun the process of reviewing our governing documents, our Memorandum and Articles of Association, all approved at the last AGM. This has been a huge task but a very worthwhile and necessary one. We are looking forward to implementing improvements in the next 12 months and beyond.

See below for details of our Management Committee members: Members in blue will remain on the Committee until the AGM when new committee members will be elected.

## Our Management Committee Members

Representative	Representing
Councillor Howard Borrell	Chesterfield Borough Council
Councillor John Boulton (until 06/05/21)	Derbyshire County Council
Rob Busby (Vice Chair from 30/06/21)	Individual member
Chris Collard (until 20/08/21)	Individual member
Alan Craw (Treasurer)	Individual member
John Duncan	Brightlife
Councillor Jenny Flood (Chair from 30/06/21)	Chesterfield Borough Council
Councillor Angelique Foster (until 06/05/21)	Derbyshire County Council
Michael Gordon (Chair until 30/06/21)	USDAW
Colin Hampton	Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres
Sasha Lawrence (co-opted member from 30/06/21)	Individual member
Councillor Duncan McGregor	Bolsover District Council
Councillor Alan Powell	North East Derbyshire District Council
José Rodgers	Mental Health Carers Association – Chesterfield and North East District
Councillor Philip Rose (from 01/07/21)	Derbyshire County Council
David Shaw	Chesterfield Citizens Advice
Julie Skill	Derby and District Law Society
Councillor Derrick Skinner	Clay Cross Parish Council
Elaine Tidd	Individual member
Angela Webster	Staveley Seniors
Sarah White (Secretary)	Individual member
Councillor Mick Wilson	Ripley Town Council
Councillor Jack Woolley (from 01/07/21)	Derbyshire County Council



# Our Members

## Individual Members

Amanda Astle  
Shay Boyle  
Robert Busby  
John Alan Crow  
Chris Collard  
Andrew Cross  
Chloe Doxey  
Rachel Driver  
David Eccles  
Graham Fairs  
Terry Gilby  
Patricia Gilby  
Ruth George  
Mark Grayling  
Mike Greenhalf  
Mary Honeyben  
Trevor Hughes  
Linda James  
Genet Morley  
Kevin Morley  
Dennis Mullings  
Martin O'Kane  
Enid Robinson  
Clarke Rogerson  
Hazel Rotherham  
Y Sorefan  
Marion Thorpe  
Elaine Tidd  
Alison Westray-Chapman  
Sarah White

## Organisational Members

50+ Inspired Group  
African Caribbean Community Association  
BrightLife  
Age UK - Derby and Derbyshire  
Aldercar and Langley Mill Parish Council  
Asian Association of Chesterfield and North Derbyshire  
Ault Hucknall Parish Council  
Bamford with Thornhill Parish Council  
Belper Town Council  
Bradwell Parish Council  
Bretby Parish Council  
Brimington Parish Council  
Burnaston Parish Council  
Chesterfield Ability  
C'field and North Derbyshire Tinnitus Support Grp  
C'field Constituency Labour Party  
C'field Liberal Democrats  
C'field Muslim association  
Chesterfield Children's Centre  
Citizens Advice Chesterfield  
Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts  
Clay Cross Parish Council  
Community Mental Health Team - Chesterfield  
Cruse Bereavement Care  
Deaf and Hearing Support - Chesterfield

Derby and District Law Society  
Derbyshire Alcohol Advice Service  
Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Grp  
Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre  
Eckington Parish Council  
Elm Foundation  
Elmton with Creswell Parish Council  
Friends of Poolsbrook Country Park  
Grassmoor, Hasland and Winsick Parish Council  
The Guinness Partnership  
Hartington Upper Quarter Parish Council  
Heanor and Loscoe Town Council  
Heath and Holmewood Parish Council  
Hulland Ward Parish Council  
Links CVS  
Matlock Town Council  
Middleton by Wirksworth Parish Council  
Muslim Welfare Association - Chesterfield and North Derbyshire  
NE Derbyshire Labour Party  
North Derbyshire Community Drug Team  
Mental Health Carers Community - Chesterfield and North Derbyshire  
Old Bolsover Town Council  
Our Vision Our Future  
Overseal Parish Council  
RELATE C'field  
Ripley Town Council

Rural Action Derbyshire  
SAIL  
Sanctuary Housing  
Shirland and Higham Parish Council  
Sight Support Derbyshire  
SPODA  
Staveley Seniors Forum  
Staveley Town Council  
Stenson Fields Parish Council  
Stoney Middleton Parish Council  
Stonham Housing Assoc  
The Volunteer Centre - Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire  
Tibshelf Parish Council  
Touchstone Community Development Ltd  
TRUST  
UNISON - CBC  
UNISON - NEDDC  
Unstone Parish Council  
USDW - Chesterfield  
Whitwell Parish Council  
Wingerworth Parish Council  
Winster Parish Council  
Wirksworth Town Council

# The Team at Derbyshire Law Centre



**Sue Allard**  
Solicitor  
(Housing and Debt)



**Madison Aspinall**  
Homeless  
Prevention Worker



**Helen Bagley**  
Co-ordinator  
(Strategic Lead)



**Wendy Bell**  
Administrator  
(Reception)



**Matthew Brown**  
Solicitor (Housing)



**Sharon Challands**  
Co-ordinator  
(Offices & Resources)



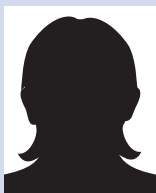
**Jane Clarence**  
Administrator  
(Caseworker Support)



**Liz Clarke**  
Administrator  
(Reception)



Administrator  
(Finance)



Assessment  
Supervisor



Advocate for  
Opportunity and  
Change



**Lisa Haythorne**  
Solicitor (Housing, Debt  
and Community Care)



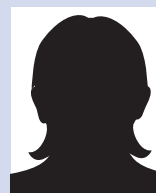
**Laura Holland**  
Solicitor (Housing)  
(until 23/06/21)



**Beth Holt**  
Solicitor (Employment  
and Immigration)



**Tracey Humphries**  
Administrator



Paralegal  
(Housing and Debt)



**Romany Kisbee-Batho**  
Paralegal (Employment  
and Immigration)  
(until 24/05/21)



**Patrick Macken**  
Advice Worker  
(Employment)



**Tony McIlveen**  
Senior Solicitor  
(Immigration and  
Employment)



**Andrew Montgomery**  
Advice Worker  
(Employment)



**Kate Morgan**  
Paralegal  
(Homelessness  
Prevention)



**Hilary Nelson**  
Advice Worker  
(Housing and  
Community Care)  
(until 31/03/21)



Personal Navigator  
For Money Sorted  
in D2N2  
(until 15/01/21)



**Alex Pearce**  
Advice Worker  
(Employment)



**Sally Preece**  
Advice Worker (Debt)



**Luke Ridge**  
Legal Executive  
(Housing)



**Mollie Roe**  
Social Worker for  
Opportunity  
and Change



**Gary Steel**  
Trainee Solicitor



**Ellen Taylor**  
Advice Worker  
(Employment)



**Steve Taylor**  
Advice Worker  
(Housing and  
Community Care)  
(until 18/08/21)



**Nikki Tugby**  
Coordinator (Reception  
and Assessment  
Services)



**Teresa Waldron**  
Co-ordinator  
(Communications,  
Projects and  
Fundraising)



**Kev Weston**  
Homeless  
Prevention  
Worker



**Joe Wilson**  
Homeless  
Prevention Worker  
(until 06/08/21)



**Troy Wilson**  
Business Admin  
Apprentice  
(until 05/02/21)



**Carmen Yates**  
Personal Navigator  
For Money Sorted  
in D2N2

## Our Organisation

**Derbyshire Law Centre, 1 Rose Hill East, Chesterfield, S40 1NU**

**Registration details:** Derbyshire Law Centre is a company limited by guarantee: 2453081

**Registered Charity No:** 702419

**Solicitors Regulation Authority:** Practice No 71302

**Auditors:** Mitchells Chartered Accountants & Business Advisers, 91-97 Saltergate, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 1LA.

## Contact us

**Contact us between 9.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday.**

We have appointments available in offices throughout Derbyshire: Bolsover, Buxton, Chesterfield, Eckington, Ilkeston and Ripley.

We can also arrange for you to talk to a specialist via telephone or Zoom.

**Contact us on: 01246 550674 or 0800 707 6990**

**Email:** [dlc@derbyshirelawcentre.org.uk](mailto:dlc@derbyshirelawcentre.org.uk)

**Text:** 07781 482826

**Textphone for deaf people:** 18001 01246 550674

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