

Housing Annual Report

2022 - 2023



Contents

Our Impact	3
Our Mission, Values and Strategic Aims	4-5
Housing Solicitor's report	6
Message from our Chair	7
Chesterfield Housing Possession Court Desk Scheme	10
Homeless Prevention Projects	12
Local Authority Caseworker Projects	15
Lloyds Bank Foundation Project	18
Derbyshire County Council Local Resilience Fund	19
Housing Repair Support Service	20
Funding	23
Internal Referrals - a Holistic Approach	24
Partnerships in the Community	26
Making a difference - who we have helped	28
The Housing Team at Derbyshire Law Centre	30
We are also reliant upon donations	31
Help us to make a difference	31
Our Offices & Organisation	32

Our Impact

During the period 1.11.2022 to 31.10.2023:



We have advised on

1915
housing
enquiries

= 33% of all enquiries

12.5%
of clients
have both a housing
case plus a case in
one other issue



We have opened

602 housing cases

= 51% of all cases

We have prevented

180 people

from being made homeless
saving local councils at least
£900,000



Our Mission

Our 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, 1-2-1 support services, information and representation to individuals and groups across our geographical area.

Our Values

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 promote personal wellbeing and to adopt safe and healthy working practices.



Our Strategic Aims

Clients and their needs

To provide a service that meets the needs of clients and is welcoming, non-judgemental and accessible for all, including an accessible initial assessment and signposting service to all enquirers.

Service delivery

To provide and increase the provision of quality assured specialist legal advice, assistance and representation in social welfare law, supported by the provision of wrap around support services.

Visibility and presence

To extend awareness of the rights and remedies available to individuals and communities and the work of the Law Centre through user involvement, information, publicity and promotional work.

Partnerships and collaboration

To continue to work in partnership with other organisations, both existing and new to identify need, enhance support for clients and maximise resources.

Culture and people

To ensure that the Law Centre has well-trained and supported staff and volunteers to deliver high quality services, guided by a well-trained board of trustees, reflective of the community to ensure good governance.

Financial sustainability

To increase and diversify the financial and other resources of the Law Centre to ensure its future sustainability.

Housing Solicitor's report

Over the last year we have seen an increasing amount of urgent housing enquiries in Derbyshire. Rising rent prices, eviction rates and heightening inflation are all contributing to more people facing housing crises across the county.

Despite the additional pressure that emergency cases bring I am exceptionally proud of the service we have delivered. We have continued to prioritise building relationships with local authorities and community organisations to provide effective resolutions for clients.

This year we are celebrating the second year of the Housing Repair Support Service which has helped clients deal with issues of disrepair in their rental homes. The national media continues to highlight the impact of poor housing conditions on our health and Derbyshire is no exception to this. The HRSS project is funded by Bolsover District Council, Chesterfield Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council and is helping us to support tenants to have repairs completed and ensure that local homes are fit for habitation.

Effective local partnerships are critical to our success, and this has never been more apparent than with our rapid response to the recent flooding across the region. In the immediate aftermath of the

flooding, we worked with councils to offer drop-in sessions in Chesterfield and Long Eaton. We also organised an emergency triage response where anyone contacting us directly was able to speak to a housing specialist within 24 hours. In total, we gave advice to over 100 households and assisted all households, regardless of their housing tenure which enabled a wider scope of people to receive free, urgent advice.

Housing shortages and changes to central public funding are creating increased pressures, particularly for those in our community who already experience the highest levels of economic and social exclusion. Since 2022 we have seen homelessness enquiries rise by 53% and whilst our Homelessness Prevention Project continues to have the much-valued support of local authorities it raises key concerns about the long-term health and prosperity of our community overall.

Although the outlook for the year seems uncertain, I am confident that the Law Centre will continue to work successfully alongside local authorities and organisations to achieve the best legal outcomes for local residents and build resilience in the community.



Lisa Haythorne
Senior Solicitor

Message from our Chair

This year Derbyshire Law Centre has been heavily involved in forging new partnerships. Through these new partnerships we have been able to make a difference to the lives of many clients as well as developing some valuable working relationships.

New projects and partnerships have enabled us to support and represent some of the most deprived in our county in their struggles, allowing us to continue to meet our mission and increase access to justice for the disadvantaged.

This report focuses on the work of Derbyshire Law Centre's housing team and is an opportunity to showcase how the funding we continue to receive has enabled us to work in partnership with funders to achieve the best outcomes for clients.

We are very proud of the work that we can continue to do for residents across Derbyshire to ensure that they receive the correct legal advice about their home and tenancy and to support them when they are facing homelessness. My thanks to all our staff and volunteers, their commitment is deeply appreciated. Lastly, I would like to thank our funders and all the organisations that have given us financial assistance for housing related work during the last 12 months. Without their help and continued support, the vital work of Derbyshire Law Centre's Housing Team could not take place.

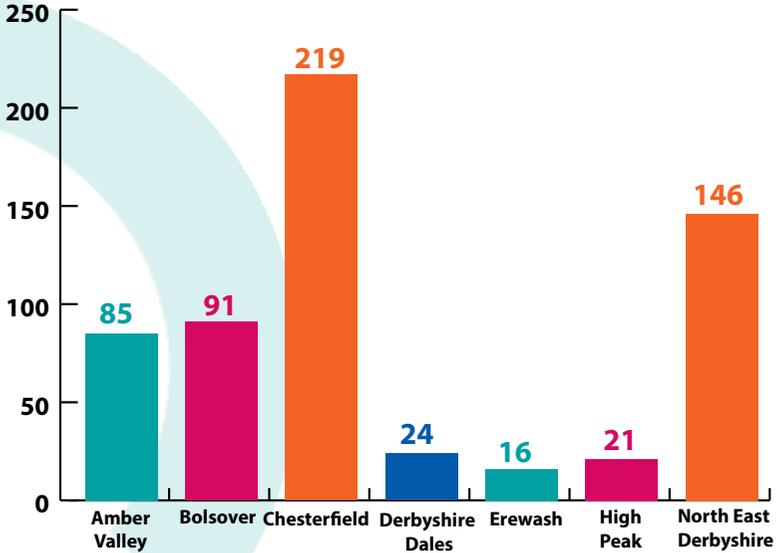
Jenny Flood,
Chair of the Management Committee



Jenny Flood
*Chair of the
Management
Committee*

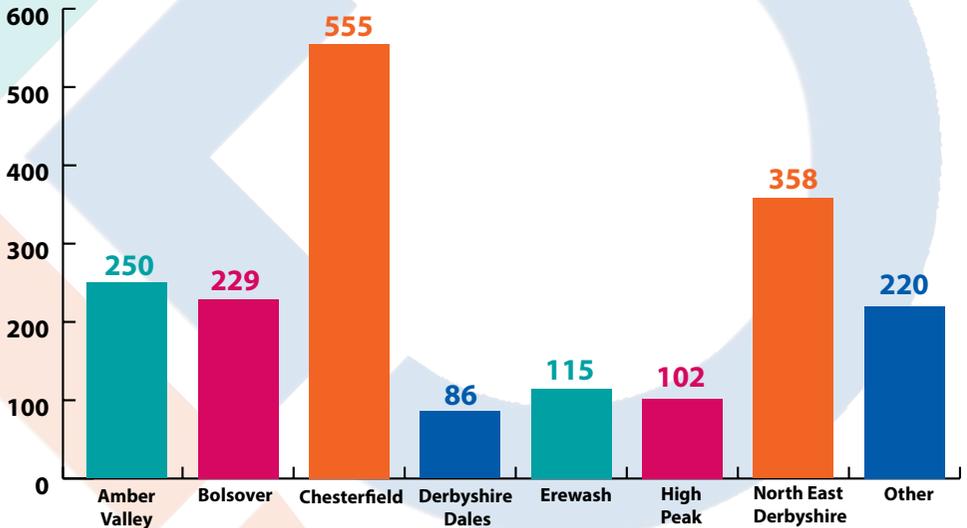
Housing cases opened - 1.11.2022 to 31.10.2023

Total 602

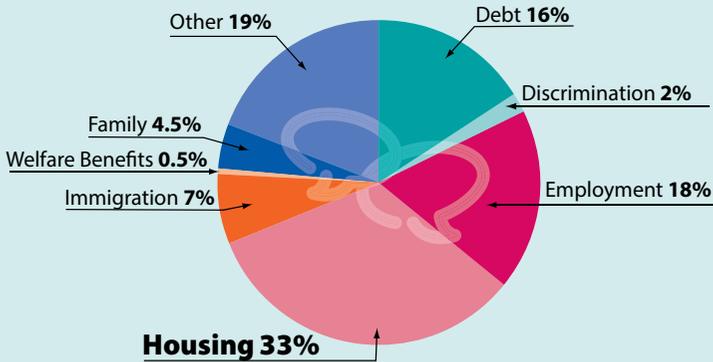


Housing enquiries - 1.11.2022 to 31.10.2023

Total 1915

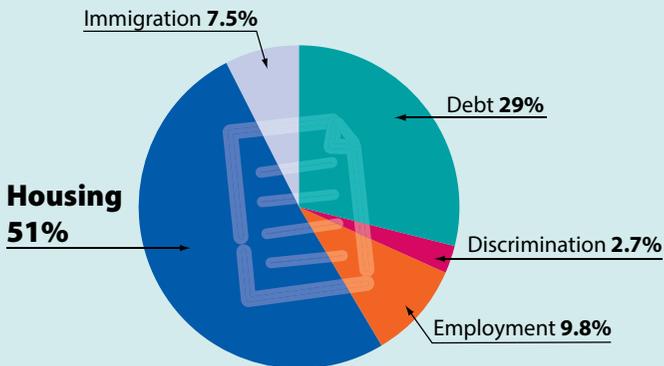


Type of enquiries



33% of all enquiries are housing enquiries

Type of cases



51% of all cases are housing cases

Chesterfield Housing Possession Court Desk Scheme

Over the last 12 months, the Law Centre has continued to provide representation to tenants and homeowners who face possession proceedings at Chesterfield County Court. The service is funded by the Legal Aid Agency, with additional supported funding from our local authorities, with the Law Centre holding a contract since its inception in 2005.

The service ensures that a housing solicitor is on hand on every day that a possession claim is due to be heard, typically every Tuesday, to provide advice and representation to those that need it.

As of 1 August 2023, the duty contract has been renamed by the Legal Aid Agency to Housing Loss Prevention Advice Services (HLPAS). Under this new contract, the Law Centre is able to provide early intervention legal advice, including on welfare benefits issues, prior to any possession hearing. There continues to be no financial eligibility criteria for representation so we are able to provide advice to all tenants and homeowners facing mortgage repossession at Court. The continued holistic approach that

the Law Centre can offer with advice for debt and employment matters, coupled with the continuation of our Homeless Prevention Project, can help with negotiations with landlords to adjourn cases whilst we work to rectify issues households are facing.

Possession cases have risen in the last 12 months with those in North Derbyshire suffering from the increase in the cost of living which has led to proceedings being taken by landlords for rent arrears. With consistent increases to interest rates brought in by the Bank of England in the first half of 2023, mortgage repossession cases are also increasing due to those on variable rates seeing their contractual monthly instalments rising dramatically. With further uncertainty for the remainder of 2023 and for 2024, and despite a number of lenders signing up to the mortgage charter, we expect more mortgage repossession cases in the coming months.

The Law Centre also continues to see an increase in cases whereby private landlords are relying upon Section 21 notices to regain possession of properties. These cases appear to be driven by two factors; the first



being an increase to mortgage rates and the second being due to Government proposals to scrap this process entirely through the Renters (Reform) Bill which was introduced to Parliament in May 2023. However, the Government announced in October 2023 that any ban on Section 21 notices

will be paused whilst a number of reforms are implemented. These include digitising more of the Court process, improving recruitment and retention of bailiffs and prioritising possession cases based on anti-social behaviour.

During the period 1/11/2022 to 31/10/23 we have:



Attended
80
in-person listings



Represented
60
households

Homeless Prevention Projects

In addition to our core work we are delighted to be able to run projects which focus on preventing homelessness and helping those clients who need advice and support with housing issues.

We have been running various homelessness prevention projects since 2018 and are delighted that continued funding has enabled us to continue this type of work.

At the end of April this year our Homelessness Reduction Act project which started in 2018 and our Homelessness Prevention Project which began in 2019 were amalgamated into one project thanks to continued funding from Amber Valley Borough Council, Bolsover District Council, Chesterfield Borough Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council, High Peak Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council.

The new project now funds three full-time homelessness prevention paralegals to support tenants in both privately rented and social housing. We prevent homelessness

by providing support and help to enable tenants to either stay in their current home or find alternative housing. We provide wrap-around support to clients, working to resolve practical issues affecting them and by securing grants for deposits or rents in advance tenants can access new accommodation. We can also help with furniture and white goods and for moving costs as well as clearing rent arrears to prevent evictions and allow access to housing registers. The work that the paralegals do also supports our court work. Often when our solicitors pick up a new client at court who is at that stage in crisis the paralegals are able to support the client with benefit applications and any other work that will help stop an eviction.

Our paralegals often identify other issues and refer clients to colleagues in our Debt and Housing Teams. We are proud that we can offer this holistic support to clients and believe that it is our ability to advise and support that enables clients to overcome many issues which may have resulted in homelessness.

Case study - Alison's story

Alison, a single mum who suffers with physical and mental health difficulties, lost her job and has been unable to work due to her physical health problems. She had also become unaware that the direct debit she had set up to pay her rent had been cancelled due to money not being in her bank account, she had been working nights and so had been unable to go into the bank to check on her account, and she is unable to use online banking.

As a result of all of this, she began to fall into rent arrears and her mental health deteriorated further. Her rent arrears had amounted to £5511.00 when we began to help her. She had been issued a warrant of eviction, and her eviction date was set for 20th October 2023. The Council had said they would be willing to suspend the warrant of eviction if the rent arrears could be resolved.

We helped her apply for the Household Support fund from the council. The council agreed to make a lump sum award of £5511.00 to clear the rent arrears, this cleared the total arrears. We also helped reduce her debt repayments on Universal Credit from £55 per month to £5 per month, this enabled her to have better control over her finances and ensure she could prioritise rent payments.

Her landlord agreed to suspend her warrant of eviction, which has meant that she and her son have been able to stay in their current home. This has given her a fresh start, and she can now focus on keeping up to date on her rent payments.

Between 1.5.2023 and 31.10.2023



Opened Cases

100



Closed Cases

132



Financial Gains

£55,045.40



Homelessness preventions:

84

Case study - Tania's story

Tania was referred to the Homelessness Prevention Project by our Housing Unit. She and her disabled 5-year-old daughter were offered a council property and were able to move in quickly. However, the new property was not carpeted, which poses a risk for Tania's daughter due to her development disability. The uncarpeted floors meant that her daughter had a higher risk of injuring herself if she falls, especially when near the stairs.

We applied for funding from Glasspool Charity Trust which has awarded £500 towards carpets. We have also noticed that Tania had other debts and is subject to bedroom tax for under-occupying by one bedroom. This creates a shortfall between her Universal Credit Housing Element and rent liability which means she would build up rent arrears if she could not make up the payment for her shortfall. We helped her apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment from the council and was awarded an ongoing payment to cover her shortfall for 27 weeks. We also referred her to our Debt Unit so she could receive further support relating to her debts. Tania and her daughter can remain in their property and her rent is now fully covered by her Universal Credit Housing Element and Discretionary Housing Payment.

Case study - Fiona's story

Fiona became homeless after a relationship breakdown. She was sleeping in her car when she approached the law centre for help. Fiona had made a homeless application to her local council, but this was rejected because her name was still on the tenancy of the property which she had left. Despite her circumstance, Fiona was able to get a job and secure a tenancy from a private landlord. The tenancy agreement asked for a deposit of £630 and first month's rent of £550 in full.

We made an application to Vicar's Relief Fund on Fiona's behalf, and she was awarded £500 towards her deposit. We then applied for Household Support Fund from the council to obtain the remaining £680 so she could move into the property and end her homelessness.

Local Authority Caseworker Projects

Funding from local authorities enables The Law Centre to provide legal and holistic housing advice to residents of Amber Valley, Erewash and North East Derbyshire. Everyone is provided with initial legal advice and for those who qualify for legal aid we are able to provide specialist casework.

Our dedicated caseworkers work closely with the local authorities and residents, the aim being to achieve the best outcomes for clients threatened with homelessness. Advice is provided on possession, disrepair, unlawful eviction and harassment.

Amber Valley Caseworker Project

Continued funding from Amber Valley Borough Council enables us to provide legal advice to the residents of the Amber Valley area. We have an in-person presence at Ripley Town Hall which allows us to see clients quickly and provide advice to them faster. By working closely with the Amber Valley

Borough Council housing team, we can get the best outcome for clients. We also work closely with the homeless prevention project so that we can provide a holistic approach to clients with a full-time homelessness prevention paralegal who also has an in presence at Ripley Town Hall.

Case study

- Sarah's story

Sarah was referred to our Amber Valley housing caseworker as she had received a s.21 from her landlord. Sarah came to Ripley Town Hall so we could see her quickly. We advised her that the s.21 she had received was valid. We referred her to our homeless prevention paralegal who also sits in Amber Valley as she needed to get on the housing register. We helped her with this, and after bidding on properties for a short while she was offered a property. Sarah has now moved into the new property.

38 clients received legal advice



Erewash Caseworker Project

15 clients received legal advice



We were delighted to have received funding from Erewash Borough Council in December 2022, to enable us to build on the success of the Amber Valley caseworker project and start a housing caseworker project in Erewash.

Our first year of this brand-new project has seen us based in the offices of Erewash B.C. providing advice to their residents. We were immediately in court on several illegal eviction cases.

Within weeks of starting the project we had made an urgent injunction application to the court after a private landlord had changed the locks to our client's property without following the proper legal process to obtain a possession order and lawfully evict their tenant.

We attended at the County Court and the Judge granted an injunction to be served on the landlord ordering them to immediately provide us with a set of keys. The client was then allowed back into the property and the case resolved soon after with the landlord

having to pay substantial costs and damages to the tenant.

We have had a number of these type of cases and we hope that as word of our presence in Erewash spreads landlords might think twice about not following the correct legal procedure.

This new project is a great opportunity to get to know the local landlords. As well as the work we are doing for clients, dealing with unlawful evictions, obtaining injunctions and representing clients in court, we are hoping to educate landlords and ultimately improve accommodation and greater security for tenants.

North East Derbyshire Caseworker Project

Our housing caseworker project in North East Derbyshire began in December 2022 when we were delighted to receive this new funding from North East Derbyshire District Council, taking our caseworker projects to 3.

The funding is used to pay for a qualified solicitor for 2 days a week and the project runs until December 2024.

Many clients we see are referred to us by NEDDC housing team who we have an excellent working relationship with. We can see clients at the office or do home visits. If an unlawful eviction does happen we can apply to the Court for an

injunction against the landlord so as to enable the tenant to return to the property and we can also make a claim for damages (compensation).

75 clients received legal advice



Case study - Joanne's story

We acted for a client (Joanne) who lived at a property where the assured shorthold tenancy was in the sole name of Joanne's ex-partner. There was a relationship breakdown and the ex-partner left.

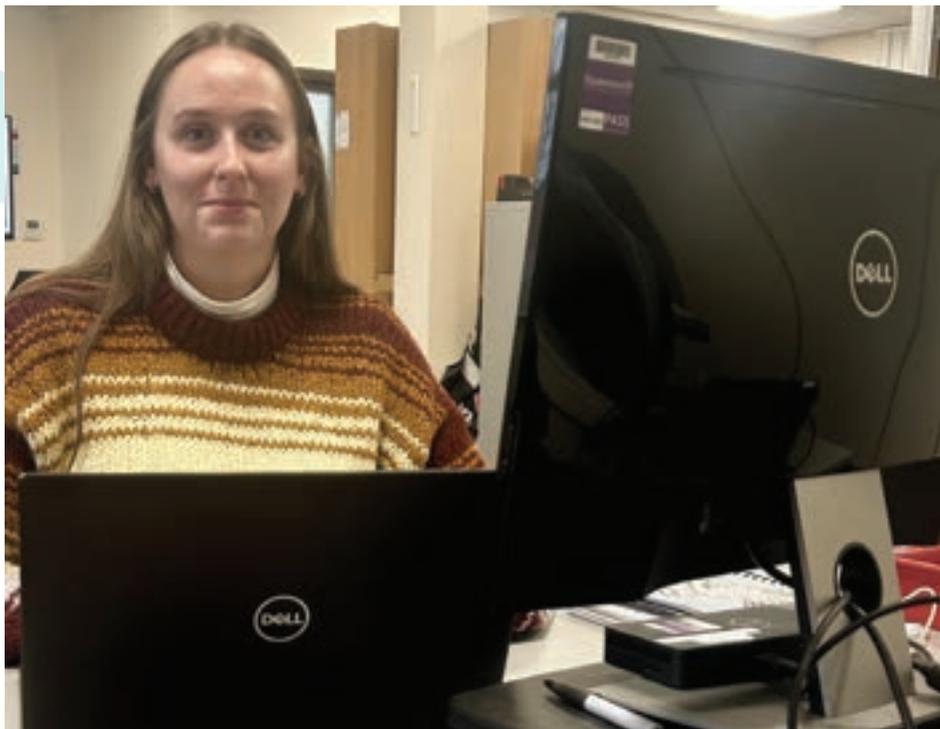
The landlord told Joanne that she would have to leave within a few weeks' time but as far as Joanne was aware no termination notice had been served and no court proceedings had been issued.

We contacted the landlord on Joanne's behalf and explained to the landlord that Joanne had a right to occupy the property in accordance with matrimonial law and she could not be evicted unless the correct procedures were followed.

The landlord then instructed solicitors who served a Section 21 notice on Joanne's ex-partner and at the same time they wrote to Joanne informing her to leave the property immediately. DLC responded to the solicitor's letter informing them that Joanne had the right to occupy until such time as the tenancy had lawfully been brought to an end. The landlord's solicitors subsequently confirmed that the landlord would follow the correct legal procedures.

Joanne subsequently found alternative accommodation.

"I want to take the opportunity to thank the law centre for their help and support and for changing my life for the better."



Madison Aspinall at The Ripley office

Lloyds Bank Foundation Project

The Lloyds bank foundation funding funds us for a part time caseworker to provide legal advice for Bolsover residents. We will be attending Bolsover

District Council's offices in the near future to provide legal advice to the residents of Bolsover.

Case study - David's story

David approached us for advice as he had been issued a s.21 by his landlord. We advised David that this was invalid. We then submitted a defence on our client's behalf and while we were waiting for this to be listed for a hearing the client found a new property and has since moved into this.

Derbyshire County Council

Local Resilience Fund

In November 2020 we received funding from DCC for six months to provide an increase in housing advice and eviction prevention support to support residents to cope with the extra pressure associated with the Covid 19 pandemic.

This has been subsequently extended to mitigate cost of living pressures. The funding has enabled us to provide additional resources for the housing unit to take on additional homelessness prevention work in High Peak, Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire, Bolsover, and Derbyshire Dales.

We have been able to increase our call backs by 50%, meaning we have been able to advise and work with more clients.

We have continued to work intensively on cases and to offer a more holistic service, facilitating prevention as well as dealing with any emergency action.

The continuation of the offer of a late evening call back slot from 4.30pm to 7pm every Tuesday when the office would normally have been closed has enabled us to reach more clients who may not be able to contact us during normal office hours.

We are grateful to DCC for this continued funding for the forthcoming year to enable this work to continue.

Housing Repair Support Service

In January 2022, the Law Centre was excited to launch a brand new and innovative project, the Housing Repair Support Service (HRSS). The HRSS project, enables us to assist and support both social housing and private sector tenants in having necessary repairs completed, ensuring local homes are both fit for habitation and of a good standard of repair in line with the requirements of current legislation.

The aim of the project is to provide specialist advice and assistance to tenants to secure appropriate repairs to public sector housing in Bolsover, Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire districts, with the aim of avoiding the excessive costs and claims which result when disrepair cases are acted on by private sector solicitors.

Following a pre-launch event at the Winding Wheel in December 2021 the Law Centre were able to recruit a full-time solicitor caseworker. Initially the project focused on a period of promotion with a HRSS advertisement on local radio for the first time and digital signage promoting the project in and around the Bolsover district. We have continued to promote the service using leaflets and digital formats and social media posts to highlight the issue of disrepair claims farmers who target residents.

Following the launch, enquiries soon started coming in and continue to do so. The Law Centre is proud to have assisted many local tenants not only in having necessary repairs completed in a timely manner, but also in securing additional compensation for damages in some cases. Excellent



Helen Bagley (Strategic Co-ordinator, DLC), Stephen Haythorne (Solicitor, Chesterfield Borough Council & Deputy District Judge) and Simon Allen (Associate FCILEx, Kennedys Law)

working relationships and contacts with local councils and housing associations means we can continue to assist with the swift resolution of repairs and negotiation of any appropriate damages whereby tenants will be entitled to keep 100% of any compensation received.

We are proud to be able to offer local tenants free assistance under the project without ordinarily needing to engage in lengthy litigious actions through the Courts, thereby helping tenants remain in a home which is both safe and in a good state of repair.

We are also able to assist clients in other ways – for example helping with access to the housing register or increased banding.

Now in its second year we are very grateful to our funders, Bolsover District Council, Chesterfield Borough Council and North East Derbyshire.

We look forward to continuing this project and hopefully attracting new funders.

The case studies below highlight some of the many positive outcomes of the project.



We are looking forward to celebrating the project with a lunch and workshop in December

Between 1.11.2022 and 31.10.2023



Case studies

Teresa's story

Teresa contacted the Law Centre as the property she was living in was suffering from disrepair; in particular dampness and mould. We contacted the landlord and the landlord agreed to offer the tenant a move to another property which the tenant accepted. The landlord also agreed to provide some furnishings for Teresa at the new property at no cost to her.

Graham's story

Graham's property had been damaged as a consequence of a fire to the next-door property leaving the Graham's roof in disrepair. Damp and mould formed inside the property. Graham contacted the Law Centre for advice and assistance. Our involvement led to the landlord agreeing to carry out the necessary repairs and to provide temporary accommodation whilst they were being undertaken. Graham was also offered some compensation in addition to the repairs being carried out.

Heidi's story

Heidi's contacted the Law Centre as her bath was leaking water into the living room below and there were other items of disrepair at the property. We contacted the landlord and thanks to our intervention the landlord carried out the repairs and agreed to pay some compensation to Heidi.

Tara's story

Tara approached the Law Centre for advice as her property had some dampness and mould and other items of disrepair. We contacted the landlord and our involvement led to the repairs being carried out. The Law Centre also assisted Tara with her request for alternative accommodation. Tara was given increased priority on the waiting list thanks to our involvement which led to the council reviewing the matter.

"Would like to say a big thank you for your help and support."

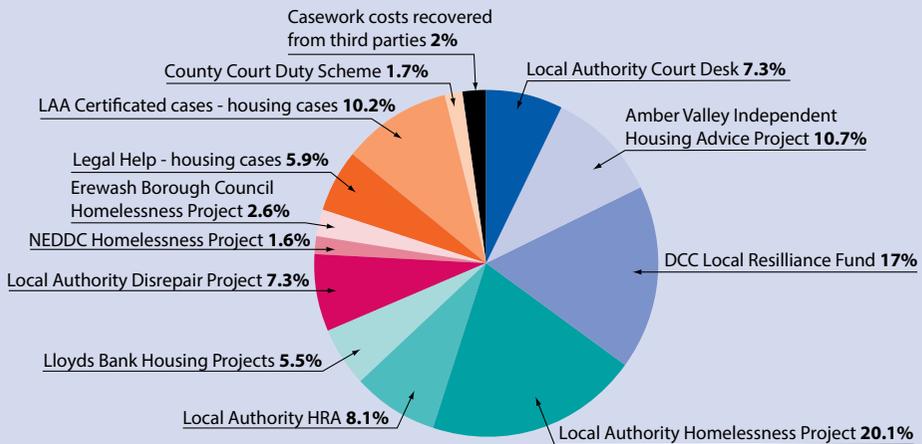
Funding

The work of the Housing Unit is funded through a mixture of funding sources, including through core funds from our funding local authorities; Chesterfield Borough Council, Bolsover District Council, Derbyshire County Council and North East Derbyshire District Council, through our Legal Aid contract and through funding for various projects.

The chart below shows the breakdown of the funding received for the various projects detailed in this report and the Legal Aid agency for the last financial year, 1.4.22 to 31.3.23.

Thank you to our funders and all the organisations that have given us financial assistance during the period. Without their help and continued support, the vital work of Derbyshire Law Centre could not take place.

Housing Funded work 1.4.2022 to 31.3.2023



Internal Referrals - a Holistic Approach

One of the things that makes Derbyshire Law Centre so effective when helping our clients is the huge range of expertise we have across departments: Employment, Immigration, Discrimination, Debt and Money Advice. The Housing Team often make internal referrals to other specialist, taking a holistic approach to ensure our clients' circumstances are improved in the long term.

Debt Advice

We work closely with our internal MaPS Funded Debt Advice Service to save tenancies. Here are just some of the things we might refer clients to a Debt Specialist for:

Help identifying ways to reduce outgoings to make their bills more affordable, such as eligibility for council tax support, energy grants, etc.

Help identifying an appropriate and "safe" bank account to have income paid into, and closing overdrafts to avoid fees and interests.

Help making affordable payment arrangements to creditors where

possible, to free up surplus income for priority bills such as rent.

Applying for a Debt Relief Order or Bankruptcy to clear rent arrears, and allow clients to access the housing register if they are homeless or need to find more suitable/affordable accommodation.

Building confidence to deal with bills and creditors.

Reducing financial stress in the long term, and helping people to feel more in control of their finances.

Breathing Space

In many cases, our debt team can request a formal "Breathing Space" from creditors, to allow the client space to get back on track without the threat of enforcement action.

This is a particularly useful tool where an eviction is due to take place due to rent arrears, when all other efforts to stop the eviction have been unsuccessful. If they are eligible, then we can refer the client to a Debt Specialist to place a 30 – 60 day hold on eviction action, so that we can work together to help improve their situation in the longer term.

Case study

We took urgent instructions from Mary who had been referred into DLC's homelessness prevention project. Mary was a tenant of a private landlord and was facing eviction in 2 days' time.

We were advised by our specialist housing team that Mary had no legal defence to the possession proceedings and there were no grounds to make any sort of emergency application to the court to stop the eviction. Because the eviction was based on rent arrears, we were able to enter Mary into Breathing Space, which prevented the eviction from going ahead and gave Mary two months to work with our homelessness prevention team to find alternative accommodation.

During the time Breathing Space was in force we were able to give Mary comprehensive advice on her debt options, and once she moved, we helped her apply for a Debt Relief Order to give her a fresh start, debt free in her new property.

At the end of the case Mary emailed us and said:

"Thank you for the email about my DRO being approved. It's such a relief being able to start afresh. Thank you for all your help. I really couldn't have done this without you, I would have been struggling to manage."

"...after speaking to you I do actually feel a little optimistic that we will be ok eventually and can start and build back up again. I really really appreciate your help in all this."

Partnerships in the Community

Partnerships in the Community Working with local authorities, external agencies and organisations in our community is essential to our success.

We rely on our partners for referrals and support on cases and clients. Over the past year we have worked to strengthen these relationships through various projects as well as working more closely with other Charities and Local Organisations.

Gussie's Kitchen

This year our Housing Caseworker's have been running outreach sessions at Gussie's Kitchen at St Augustine's Church in Chesterfield. Gussie's is a foodbank and an essential part of the community. Through our Chair Jenny Flood, we have a strong connection with Gussie's Kitchen and in many instances have referred our clients to their service. We attend Gussie's on a Wednesday morning and are one of a group of advice agencies that help visitors. This September we were also pleased to have a stall at the Gussie's Summer Gala to speak to local residents and share our handy household merchandise. Our outreach at Gussie's means that we can have an

informal conversations with people to identify any housing, debt or employment issues. We can help to understand the different elements of their problem and see which of our internal units can help or whether we need to signpost them to an external partner.



Jenny Flood and Rob Busby at our Foodbank drive

The future

As well as maintaining our existing partnerships we are looking forward to setting up new projects and engaging with new partners as well as re-starting former partnerships. Plans are already in place to work with Ukrainian refugees and to work with Pathways. We are really looking forward to expanding our support and building new relationships.

Helping Ukrainian refugees

In the last year we have been contacted by several Ukrainian refugees who had initially moved in with hosts in Derbyshire believing that their time here would be for a short period.

As the war in Ukraine has continued for over a year many hosts' circumstances have changed and some of the relationships have had to come to an end. We have therefore supported several Ukrainian clients who needed help with obtaining new homes and tenancies. Explaining our laws around assured shorthold tenancies is challenging when their first language isn't English, so the language barrier has created new difficulties for us.

Our immigration and Employment teams have also advised many guests who have had queries during their stay in Derbyshire.

We are hoping next year to develop a Ukrainian project funded by Derbyshire County Council and the district councils.



The Housing Unit at the launch of the Derbyshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, May 2023

Pathways

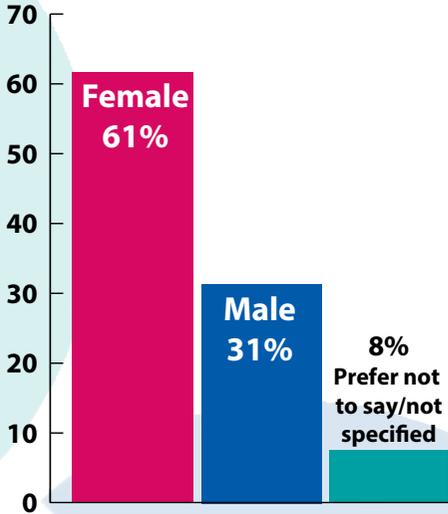
We are about to recommence weekly sessions at Pathways, something we stopped during lockdown and have been keen to re-start. We will see clients at Pathways for appointments set up by them and one of our Solicitors will offer legal advice. This partnership working enables partner organisations to work together to get the best support for clients.

"Everything ok good thanks."

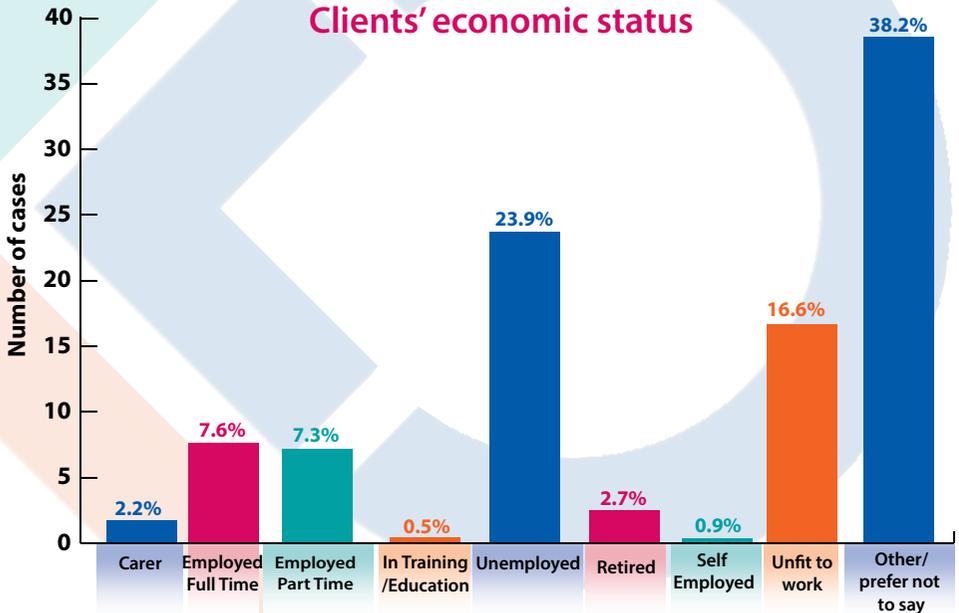
"Cannot ask for anything better, people feel embarrassed by their situation like I was but I wouldn't have got through it without the law centre, they do not judge you they help you."

Making a difference - who we have helped

Gender of our clients



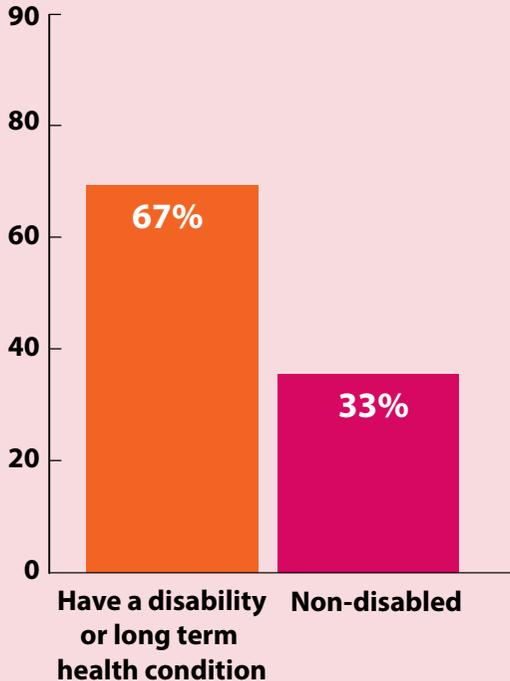
Clients' economic status



Age ranges of our clients

under 24yrs	= 5.5%
25 - 34yrs	= 24.4%
35 - 49yrs	= 36.5%
50 - 64yrs	= 24.8%
65+yrs	= 5.3%
Prefer not to say	= 3.5%

Disability or long term health condition of our clients



The Housing Team at Derbyshire Law Centre



Madison Aspinall
Caseworker
(Housing)



Matthew Brown
Solicitor
(Housing)



Elissa Hartley
Paralegal
(Homelessness
Prevention)



Hannah Haythorne
Paralegal
(Housing)



Lisa Haythorne
Senior Solicitor



Amy Law
Paralegal
(Homelessness
Prevention)



Stephen Oliver
Solicitor
(Housing)



Gary Steel
Solicitor (Housing,
Employment &
Discrimination)



Kev Weston
Paralegal
(Homelessness
Prevention)



Codie Whitworth
Paralegal
(Housing)

The Housing Team are supported by a larger team of staff, including administrators and co-ordinators. The Housing Team also work in partnership with all other members of staff.

See the DLC Annual Report 2022/2023 for a full list of the DLC team.

Help us to make a difference

With your help we can continue to increase the number of clients we are able to help, support, advise and signpost, helping them to deal with their problems and change their lives.

With growing financial pressures and funding cuts we want to make sure that we are able to continue to offer services to help even more residents in Derbyshire.

We are also reliant upon donations

Our donations page may be found at

www.mydonate.bt.com/charities/derbyshirelawcentre

Donations are also accepted through our Facebook page.

Derbyshire Law Centre is governed by a board of trustees, known as our Management Committee, elected annually at our AGM.

Please see this year's full Annual Report for further details about our members, trustees and other information about the organisation as a whole and achievements over the last 12 months.





Your specialist legal advice charity

Our Offices

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 virtually.

Contact us on: 01246 550674 or 0800 707 6990

Email: dlc@derbyshirelawcentre.org.uk

Text: 07781 482826

Textphone for deaf people: 18001 01246 550674

Website: www.derbyshirelawcentre.org.uk



[@derbyshirelawcentre](https://www.facebook.com/derbyshirelawcentre)



[@DerbyshireLC](https://twitter.com/DerbyshireLC)



[Derbyshirelawcentre](https://www.instagram.com/Derbyshirelawcentre)

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.