

Research and campaigns newsletter



Lincoln &
District

Issue 2: January 2022

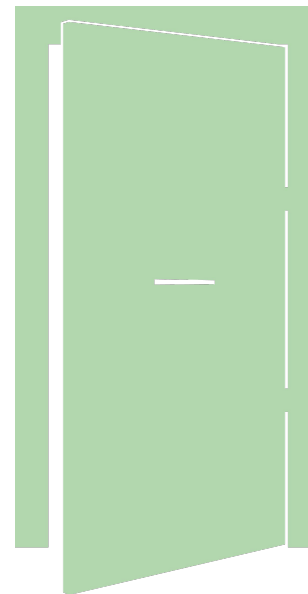
Welcome

Welcome to the second issue of our Research and Campaigns e-newsletter.

Over the last 3 months our team of staff and volunteers have continued to provide an excellent service to our clients, supporting with many different issues to deal with the challenges people are facing. You can read some of the feedback we have had from clients within this newsletter (see 'Feedback from Clients' page).

As a Country, we are living through particularly challenging times at the moment with the cost of living on the increase and energy suppliers going out of business, alongside the impact that the Covid 19 pandemic is still having on our local community and the rest of the world. We have seen the real impact this is having through our money advice work and over the last 3 months we have negotiated on £396,422.00 worth of priority and non priority debts for our clients. We have also worked with clients with the aim to improve their financial situation by securing an additional £385,350.00 in additional income for clients over the last 3 months.

A big thank you to our dedicated team of staff and volunteers, you make a real difference to people's lives.



What's been happening

We continue to provide the majority of our advice services via digital channels. With face to face provision being made available for our more vulnerable clients who may not be able to access support digitally, whether due to capability or capacity. For the majority of our clients this proves to be beneficial, but we are well aware there are clients still struggling to gain the support they need. We continue to demonstrate the requirement for additional capacity in order to best meet the needs of our clients.

We have seen a substantial increase in the demand for our service over recent weeks, which is in part due to the recent £500 million Household Support Fund available to provide financial support to vulnerable clients over the winter period.

Some of our trainee advisers will be starting delivery of telephone advice in the coming weeks which will increase our capacity at the first point of contact. Our newest group of trainees commenced their training in January and have made a great commitment to the programme so far. Good luck to all our trainees, its great to have you on board.



The team

Daisy Hammond - Research and campaigns coordinator

Janet Collins - Trustee board representative

Lisa Wilkinson - Research and campaigns support officer

Itai Mukwenya - Research and campaigns volunteer

Tumaini Machary - Research and campaigns volunteer



National research and campaigns

'Be wise to being green' - overview

National Consumer Week 2021 ran from 6 December. The campaign, 'Be wise to being green', focussed on enabling consumers to make eco-friendly consumer decisions in a safe and savvy way.

The campaign aimed to:

- Raise awareness and understanding amongst consumers about misleading environmental and energy efficiency claims, with a focus on scams, rogue traders and greenwashing
- Educate consumers on what steps they should take when making decisions related to environmental and energy efficiency claims to protect themselves from bad practice
- Empower consumers to seek redress in cases where something has gone wrong
- Raise awareness of where consumers can go if they need more advice on an issue



'Be wise to being green' - our support

At Citizens Advice Lincoln & District we supported this campaign by:

- Distributing leaflets to consumers via the Trussell Trust/Community Larder and Community Grocery store food banks to raise awareness in line with the campaign
- Sharing a press release with Lincolnshire Echo, BBC Radio Lincolnshire and Lincs FM outlining Citizens Advice Lincoln and District's five top tips to stay safe when making your home more energy efficient
- Giving an interview with Lincs FM that went out as part of their hourly news bulletins
- Contacting our local MP, Karl McCartney, to provide local statistics in relation to the campaign and outlining how Citizens Advice Lincoln and District will be supporting this
- Publishing regular tweets on our twitter page about this issue
- Sharing information with our local district council for them to use on their website and social media

Whilst the campaign only runs for one week of the year, we aim to support clients and the general public with keeping themselves safe from green scams throughout the whole year.

#EnergyKnowHow - overview

This campaign is running throughout the winter and has superseded the usual Big Energy Saving Winter campaign due to several energy suppliers failing and rising energy prices. Instead the campaign focuses on using the trusted Citizens Advice brand to get clear and fast energy advice to consumers who are experiencing difficulties.

It aims to make sure people are not paying too much for their energy and have all the information they need to keep warm this winter. For example, by answering questions such as:

- Has your supplier gone bust? Don't worry! We'll explain what to do.
- Should you switch energy suppliers?
- Do you know what a Winter Fuel Payment is?
- Are you worried about your energy bill this winter? You might be eligible for the Warm Home Discount
- Struggling to pay your energy bills?



#EnergyKnowHow - our support

We supported this campaign by:

- Producing an article for the Lincoln Independent magazine to be published mid January
- Publishing regular tweets on our twitter page about this issue
- Continuing to gather evidence from our clients through AICs, the 'Energy Know How' tag and evidence forms
- Providing clients with an energy advice booklet which contains information for clients on energy suppliers, meter readings and how to save money on energy bills.

Our work on this campaign will continue throughout the remaining winter months in line with guidance from the national team.



Cost of living crisis - overview

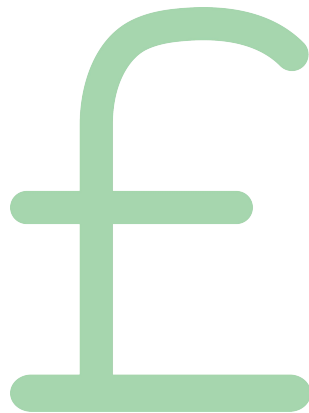
What's the cost of living crisis?

Millions of people are facing a cost of living crisis as they're hit by increased energy costs and rising inflation, while the £20 Universal Credit uplift has ended. Those on the lowest incomes will be hit hardest and we know our frontline advisers are already supporting people who can't afford rent, food or heating.

The campaign

With the energy price cap set to increase further this April, it's predicted to push an additional **2 million more households into fuel poverty**, bringing the total to 6 million. We know this will have a huge effect on those who come to us for help.

The government must act now and fast. We're proposing this is done through the benefits system in April when prices rise and through reforming the Warm Home Discount this winter.



Cost of living crisis - our support

At Citizens Advice Lincoln & District we have already supported this campaign by:

- Sharing a blog with our local MP outlining immediate steps the government can take to ease the strain this winter
- Gathering evidence from our clients through AICs, using the 'Cost of Living Crisis' and 'UC cut' tags and completing evidence forms

We will continue to support this campaign by:

- Posting regular tweets to our [Twitter page](#) to promote our message and reach decision makers
- Continuing to submit evidence forms that provide examples of how the cost of living crisis is impacting our clients
- Continuing to use the relevant tags to our client write-ups to show the prevalence of this issue
- Joining the insights panel to help the National Policy Team monitor the current cost of living crisis, and the implementation of support schemes introduced by the government

Local research and campaigns

Housing - overview

There's been a change in provision for the Housing Related Support contract which came into effect April 2021. The aim of this support is outlined below:

"The Customers Housing Related Support (HRS) service will provide high quality and accessible direct support, available to eligible adults in Lincolnshire who are either threatened with homelessness or are experiencing homelessness. The service will offer two individual components of support, and offer tailored support based on those with moderate and those with more intensive needs:

1. Floating Support - provided by District Council
2. Accommodation based Support - provided by District Council"

Our concern is that under the new contract, there is no longer an impartial organisation working with individuals to establish their need for housing, support them in securing housing, or ensure their needs are met by tailoring service delivery and communication. Clients with very specific vulnerabilities can be referred to Framework for support, however this referral is made at the discretion of the district council.



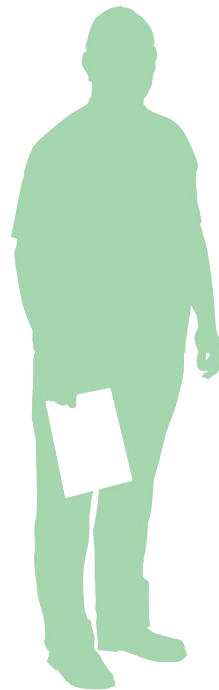
Housing - what we are doing

We have already supported this research by:

- Meeting with the Public Health Programme Manager and Senior Contract Officer from Lincolnshire County Council to discuss our concerns and start engagement.

We will continue to support this research by:

- Meeting with Framework and the City of Lincoln Council to better understand their support within the homeless community
- Continue to gather evidence from our clients presenting with housing related issues via AICs and evidence forms
- Compile case studies of clients where the current system may not be meeting their needs - for whatever reason
- Engage with other local like-minded organisations working with the homeless community to better understand the scale of the issue



Mental health support services - update

So far we've successfully gathered information on the mental health support services that are available locally.

Historically we have been funded to offer additional support to these individuals when they have required advice. This has often led to a need to provide this advice to a casework level. We are keen to demonstrate that there is still a need to offer this level of support and how it can be accessed.

However, it has also been highlighted that this additional support is required for clients with other additional needs such as learning disabilities, effective communication in English, physical disabilities and a general lack of confidence/ability to effectively deal with their presenting issue.

In light of this, we will continue to gather client data to first identify if there is a need and to what extent. Then potentially incorporate other additional support services into this project to help shape the service, support and signposting we offer our clients to best suit their needs.

To better reflect the expanded scope of the project, we've re-titled it 'Additional support services'.



Additional support services - overview

Through our work, we are hoping to demonstrate the need for suitable and appropriate levels of support.

We will continue with this campaign initially by:

- Gathering evidence from our clients through the use of tags, evidence forms and AIC's
- Compiling case studies that demonstrate the need for additional and ongoing support for these clients
- Ongoing engagement with our Session Supervisors and Service Manager to better understand the scale



Gathering evidence

Advice Issue Codes (AICs)

These are the codes we add to our client write-ups on Casebook. They are used to show the prevalence of issues or trends.



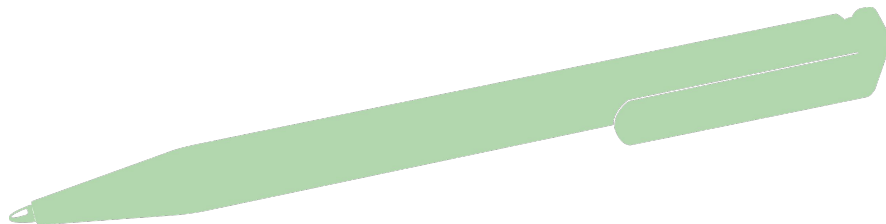
Evidence forms

Evidence forms are a vital source of data and information. They provide evidence for local and national Research and Campaigns work by telling a client's story and the impact an issue has had on them and their lives.

This evidence can be shared through the evidence form tab on each case.

The evidence form tab should be completed in the following circumstances:

- In response to a local or national call for evidence
- If you've seen a client whose case is a really powerful example of the impact of unfair policy or practice
- If the problem is new or something you've not seen before.



Calls for evidence

Calls for Evidence are flagged in the notification bar at the top of the Casebook screen.

They prompt advisers to write an evidence form based on the AICs added to a case.

An example of a current Call for Evidence includes issues caused by By Now Pay Later products.

By adding AICs and completing evidence forms the network provides key information to the central teams to help them monitor what is happening nationally and to aid them with national research and campaigns work.



Our evidence forms Oct to Dec 2021

Enquiry area	No of evidence forms
Benefits	5
Housing	2
Consumer	1

Social and print media

Our [twitter page](#) is an important tool for us in sharing the work we are doing and for raising awareness of national campaigns.

We have a [Citizens Advice Lincoln & District internet page](#) which we will also use to promote our research and campaigns work.

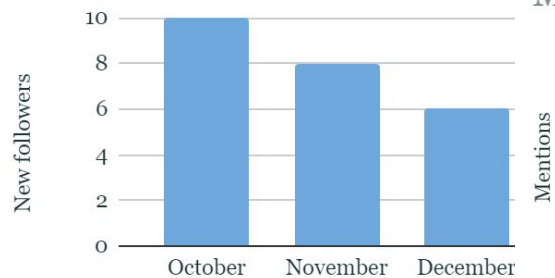
The [Lincoln Independent](#) is a monthly publication with a reach of over 10,000 readers across the City. We have started a monthly column within the magazine to promote the work Citizens Advice Lincoln is doing and raise awareness of some of our campaigns



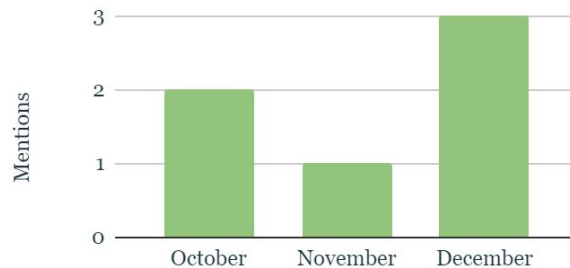
Twitter statistics



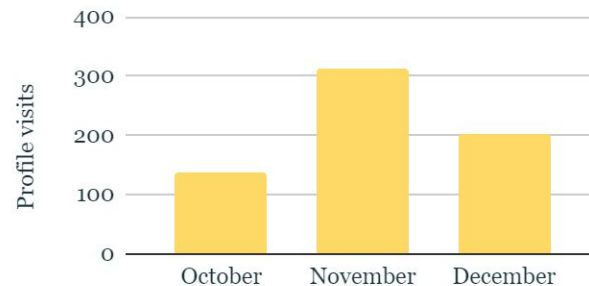
New followers



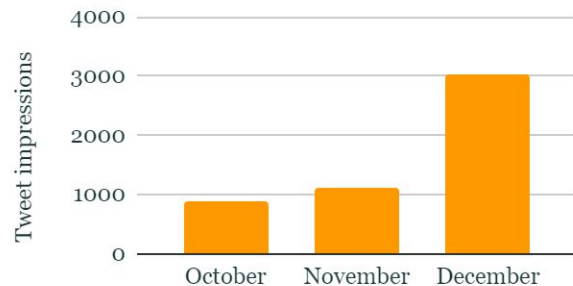
Mentions



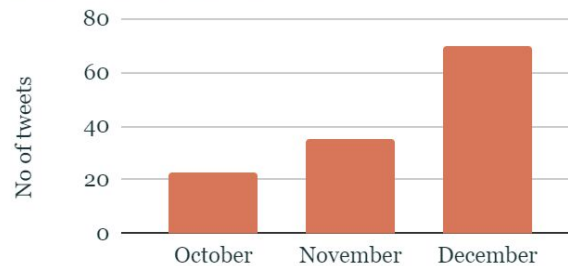
Profile visits



Tweet impressions



No of tweets vs.



Feedback from clients

Some of the amazing feedback provided by our clients.

"I found the service I was given was excellent. The gentleman I spoke to went over everything to make sure i had all the info I needed. Thank you very much."

"Outstanding from start to finish. Helped me with two matters. Went above and beyond. Fantastic service."

"The gentlemen who assisted me was absolutely exceptional, I cannot praise him highly enough for his knowledge understanding and frankness. An asset to your organisation."

"I felt reassured by the advice and help given to me at a very stressful time in my life. I cannot thank the CAB enough for their assistance. I could not have resolved my problems without them."

"Great, professional and friendly service provided by the staff in Lincoln citizens advice. My case is currently ongoing at this time but has been managed with care and precision. The knowledgeable Lincoln team have taken me through many different options and have helped find a solution to multiple issues. Even during these hard times with our country being exposed to Covid-19 Lincoln Citizens Advice's committed team have kept me up to date regarding my case and have been a great deal of help from the very beginning. Greatly appreciated."

Feedback from you

We welcome feedback on our newsletter and the work we are carrying out, so please do send your comments and suggestions to us at:

researchandcampaigns@citizensadvicelincn.org.uk

If you have any further questions regarding anything contained within this document please get in touch.



Thank you

To everyone involved in the research and campaigns work carried out at Citizens Advice Lincoln & District and to those who contributed to the development of this newsletter.

researchandcampaigns@citizensadvicelincn.org.uk

