

Research and campaigns newsletter



Lincoln &
District

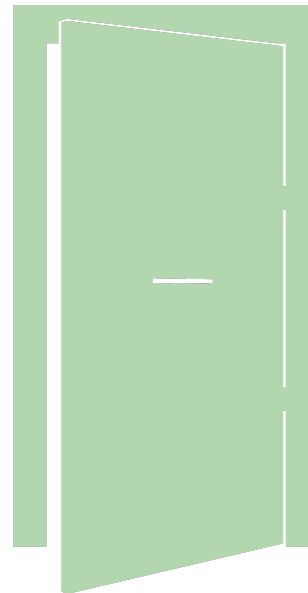
Issue 1: October 2021

Welcome

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

Here at Citizens Advice Lincoln & District our team of staff and volunteers have been working tirelessly to support the local community to deal with the challenges they face.

Despite the difficulties the Covid-19 pandemic has presented us with, our team has continued to provide essential services to the people of Lincoln and the surrounding area. Since the start of the pandemic we have supported 5,780 clients with 13,410 issues. Just since the start of this financial year we have assisted our clients to negotiate on £470,880 worth of debt and supported clients via our benefits services helping them to gain a total of £989,910 in additional income.



What's been happening

At the start of the pandemic we created a digital-based advice service overnight, having historically provided the majority of our service via the face to face channel. We continue to see a rise in the demand for our services particularly via Adviceline, our telephone advice helpline. Whilst we are not open to the public for face to face in the way we once were, we are now offering face to face follow-up appointments to those clients who struggle to access the digital platforms via our money advice, Help to Claim and generalist services.

We have recently recruited a group of trainees who are working their way through our training programme to give us a greater scope to offer our services to even more people.

Research and campaigns is a twin aim of Citizens Advice. As such we have this year started up a Lincoln & District research and Campaigns team who will support the work the national team carry out, as well as start to look at ways we can drive things forward locally for the Lincoln & District area.



Meet 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

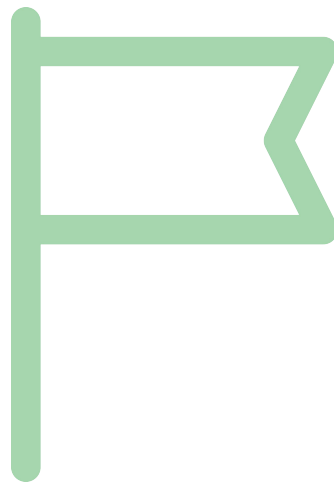
Scams awareness - overview

This is a national campaign run by the Consumer Protection Partnership and led by Citizens Advice with key support from partners such as the Trading Standards service.

The campaign ran for two weeks in June and is an annual opportunity to empower the public against scams.

The campaign aims to create a network of informed, confident consumers who know how to:

- recognise scams when they see them
- report scams to the appropriate channels
- talk about their experiences to help raise public awareness of scams



Scams awareness - our support

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

- Working in partnership with our District Council, City of Lincoln Council, to promote awareness of the campaign and how people can protect themselves from falling victim to scams. The City of Lincoln Council promoted the campaign by sharing our press release on their website and including the campaign within their social media engagements.
- Producing and sharing a press release with local press.
- Working with the Bailgate Independent (a local magazine) to produce an article raising awareness of scams within their June issue.
- Including details of the campaign on [our website](#) and a link to the national Citizens Advice pages.
- Sharing details of the campaign with our local Voluntary Centre Services for inclusion in their e-newsletter.
- Posting regular tweets to our [Twitter page](#) in the run up to and throughout the campaign to support in raising awareness of the ways in which people can be scammed and how to look out for them.

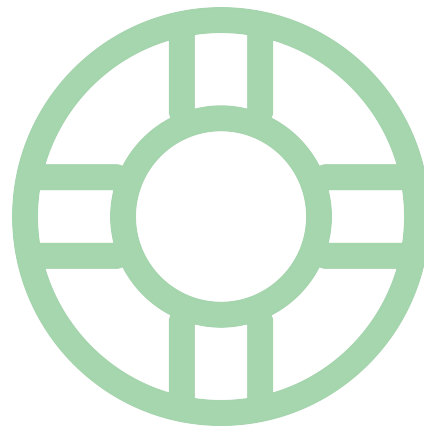
Whilst the campaign only runs for two weeks of the year, we aim to support clients and the general public with keeping themselves safe from scams throughout the whole year.

#KeepTheLifeline - overview

This is a national campaign run by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. It's supported by many charities, including Citizens Advice. The campaign called on the government to keep - not cut - the lifeline of £20 per week in Universal Credit and Tax Credit this October. We welcomed the Government's decision at the start of the pandemic to increase Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits by £20 a week. This uplift has provided a lifeline for millions of families across the UK, during extraordinarily tough times.

Every day our advisers speak to people who have had their lives turned upside down by this pandemic. Many who've never needed support from the benefits system, and others who were already on a financial cliff edge going into the crisis.

As the labour market and economy recovers, it's vital that Universal Credit provides a strong safety net. The £20 uplift helped to ensure that people could cover their essential costs, like food and rent, whilst helping them build financial resilience and keeping more money in the local economy.



#KeepTheLifeline - our support

We supported this campaign by:

- Contacting our local MP Karl McCartney to provide information on how removing this uplift will adversely affect people in Lincoln.
- Publishing a press release in the Lincolnshire Echo and on Lincolnshire Live.
- Giving a radio interview with Lincs FM.
- Publishing regular tweets on our twitter page about this issue.

Despite the government doubling down on their decision to take away the £20-a-week, we're continuing to push our message that millions of people could face a cost of living crisis this winter.



Upcoming national campaigns

National Consumer Week

National Consumer Week was due to take place 11-15 October but in light of the ongoing issues in the energy market Citizens Advice have decided to postpone this year's campaign, which will be on the topic of misleading energy claims. This will allow more focus to be on the immediate advice consumers need as suppliers go out of business and energy costs increase. It is likely this will now take place later this year.

Big Energy Saving Winter

Big Energy Saving Winter is a national campaign to help people cut their energy bills and get all the financial support they're entitled to. It is unknown at the moment whether the current energy crisis will affect this campaign, but historically this has run during the winter months (November - January). We are hoping to be able to report more on this in our next issue.

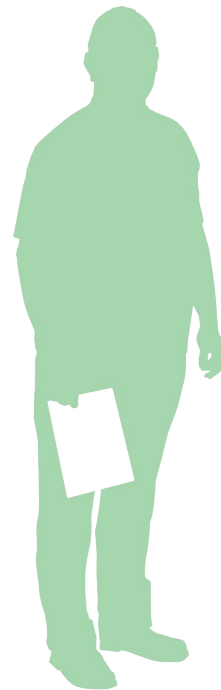


Local research and campaigns

Test and trace payment - overview

Following a call on Adviceline, there was some concern around how the test and trace payments work. The adviser wondered whether the client may have been negatively affected due to their employer not providing them with an ID number. The concern was either the system, or the employers actions, were financially impacting the client. Upon further research, we were able to find out the following information about the test and trace payment.

On 28 September 2020, the Government introduced a new legal requirement to self-isolate for anyone who has been notified that they have tested positive for Covid-19, and for anyone notified that they were in close contact with a person who has tested positive.



Test and trace payment - what we did

The £500 Test and Trace Support Payment is available for those on low income. The grant is offered in a lump sum as support to those who cannot work during their self-isolation period.

An NHS Test and Trace Account ID is issued to anyone who is notified to self-isolate by Test and Trace. This ID can then be used to apply for the £500 grant. Employer's can also register employees who need to self-isolate to the Self Isolation Service Hub so they can be issued the Test and Trace ID (also known as CTAS).

This research aims to help our local office stay updated and to make an informed decision on the issues affecting our service users and the local community as a whole.

In addition we can ensure we are sharing information and updates on the test and trace payment scheme via our twitter page and website.



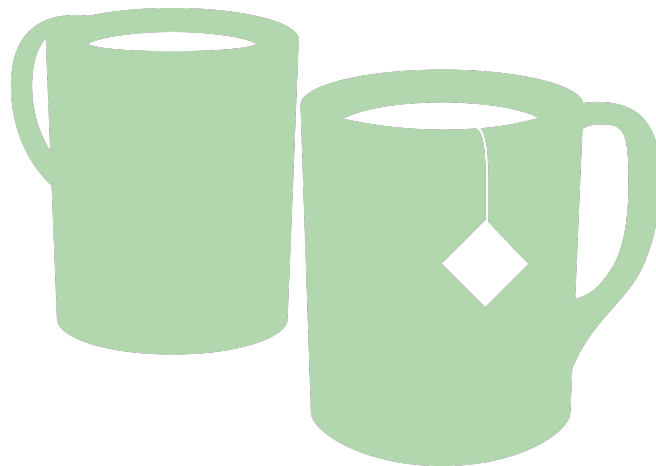
Mental health support services - overview

We want to promote positive mental health for everyone through our research and campaigns work. The mental health research we carry out will help to shape the service, support and signposting we offer our service users to best suit their needs. Mental health is a pressing issue for the community and policymakers. The need for mental health support has become increasingly prominent over the past year, particularly due to the pandemic and lockdowns.

The research team hope their findings will help to:

- Raise awareness on mental health
- Collect information on local and national support available
- Highlight gaps in the mental health support system (accessibility or otherwise)

We have reviewed, and are continuing to review, the mental health services available in order to provide information on the different types of support available both locally (Lincoln) and nationally.



Mental health services - our support

We're supporting this campaign by:

- Creating dedicated tweets on a variety of mental health subject matter
- Creating an information database for mental health support services (locally and nationally)
- Working with mental health charities/CICs in Lincolnshire to understand the demands of their service users and gaps in their service
- Sharing information and statistics on mental health



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.



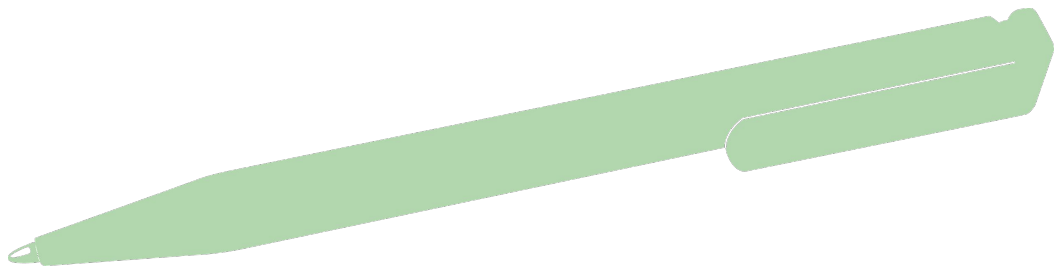
Evidence forms

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 Apr to Sep 2021

Enquiry area	No of evidence forms
Benefits	7
Employment	2
Housing	2
Consumer	1
Health	2

Social media and online

Our social media engagement via Twitter has seen a substantial increase since the start of this financial year. We now have 847 followers on Twitter and in July alone our page made 4,914 impressions (the number of times a tweet has been seen) compared to 615 impressions in July 2020.

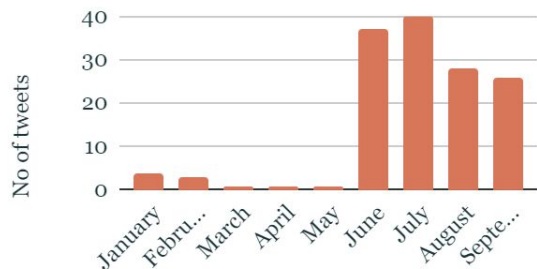
Our twitter page is an important tool for us in sharing the work we are doing and for raising awareness of national campaigns.

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

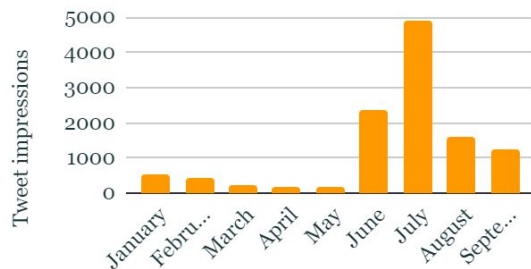


Twitter statistics

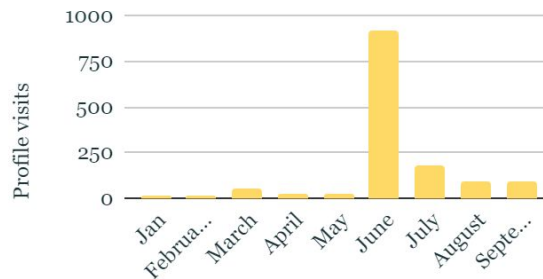
No of tweets vs.



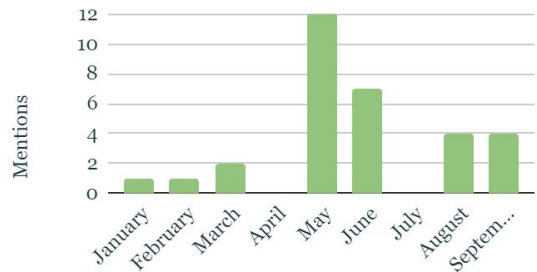
Tweet impressions



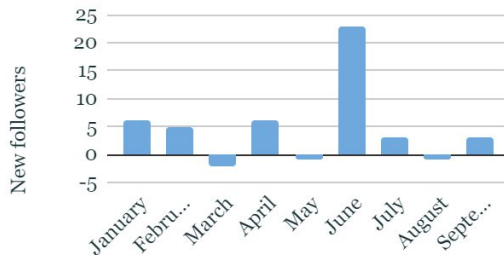
Profile visits



Mentions



New followers



Feedback

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@citizensadvicelincoln.org.uk

