

Advice Worker Monthly Report on in centre appointments, October 2020

Appointments offered: 84

Appointments attended: 67

Summary

- Housing referrals and housing advice : 34
- Housing placements : 7
- Night-shelter placements : 1
- Housing interventions (liaising with Landlords re suitability, rent reduction, rent payments, disrepair etc.) 13
- Income maximisation including grants, freedom passes, DHP applications and foodbank referrals : 15
- Welfare benefit advice : 31
- Immigration advice : 4
- Legal advice: 2
- Bank account opening :3
- Customer rights advice : 2
- Employment : 1
- Help to get identity documents : 3
- Outreach referrals : 2
- Debt : 2

Case Study:

Michael approached the advice service for the first time at the beginning of October. He was homeless and recently bereaved, as he had been staying with his partner and could no longer occupy her property after she passed away. He had also been left with no way to access his benefits as this had been getting paid into his partner's bank account. He was now struggling to open a bank account of his own, as he did not have any photo ID. On top of everything, Michael was unwell, dealing with a serious heart condition. Michael was at this point very low, having to cope with a lot of different things.

Firstly, we helped Michael to apply to the council for help as a homeless person, advising him what evidence he would need and writing a supporting letter. We struggled to get through to the council that day on the phone, so at 4pm when the housing office closed, we gave Michael their out of hours phone number to try. He was able to get through, and the out of hours team were able to pick up the information we had sent earlier in the day. As Michael did not have access to his money, we gave him some emergency supplies and a topped up Oyster card.

To help Michael get access to his money, we wrote a covering letter for him to take to the Credit Union. As a backup, I emailed our DWP liaison worker, who specialises in helping homeless and marginalised people with benefits problems, and asked if there was any other way to receive the money. She was able to give us good advice on how Michael could access his money without a bank account.

As Michael now had a safe place to stay, he was eventually able to sort out a new passport and bank account for himself and is now doing much better.