

Citizens Advice Mid Lincolnshire

Boston Big Local Report - OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2017

This project has enabled us to help 16 people from the Boston Big Local for more specialist advice.

With increased awareness of the project and the specific geographical/postcode areas, internally, there has been an increase in the number of clients identified as eligible for help during the quarter, and these will be reported upon shortly.

The case studies below show a snapshot of the clients helped and the help received from the project.

We continue to help clients with a range of issues as you can see including Employment issues, Holiday Pay and Sickness Pay, Benefits and Housing.

Case Study One - PE21 8

Client is single and receives statutory sick pay. She had been in hospital for 1 week. When she returned to her privately rented property she found that the locks had been changed. The client had no idea as to why this had happened. She visited Boston Borough Council and made a homeless application. As a result of this, the client has been placed in emergency accommodation. However this was only for the short term, whilst the homeless application was being investigated.

The client also stated that she had no food. Unfortunately the food bank was closed on the day of the clients visit. The adviser therefore issued the client with an emergency food parcel.

The client was informed to return to CAML once she was feeling better in order to make sure that she was receiving all of applicable benefits.

Case Study Two - PE21 8

The client had worked for an employment agency between 07/08/2017 and 25/09/2017. He was working full time but was on a zero hours contract.

The client broke his ankle and was no longer able to work full time hours. The client therefore left the company and found a new job. However the client believed that he had not been paid for the holiday entitlement that was owed to him by the agency. The client stated that he took no holiday time off whilst employed by the agency. The adviser calculated that during the period employed and based on the number of hours worked, the client was entitled to 38 hours holiday pay. The client had previously spoken to his employer but they did not reach a solution.

The adviser explained the next steps that the client could take which was for the client to raise a grievance by way of letter. The adviser assisted the client to write the letter.

The client was informed that if he should post the letter and that if he had not received a satisfactory response from his employer within 14 days, he should return to CAML for further assistance.

Case Study Three - PE21 8

The client owned his own home and worked full time earning £1600 per month. He had the opportunity to reduce his hours which would allow him to assist his disabled wife a little more at home. This would reduce his earnings to £800 per month. The clients wife was in receipt high rate Disability Living Allowance and Employment Support Allowance.

The client wished to know if he could apply for any additional benefits, in particular, Carers Allowance. After researching the issue, the adviser identified that even with the reduced earnings, the client would still be over the £116 per week earnings limit. He would therefore not be eligible for Carers Allowance.

However the adviser identified that the client could be entitled to Council Tax Reduction. The adviser therefore explained to the client how he could apply for this benefit. Practical assistance was offered to complete the form. However the client declined as he felt able to apply for the benefit without assistance.

Case Study Four - PE21 8

Client was employed by an agency between 03/09/2015 and 23/09/2017. However the client found alternative employment and therefore stopped working for the agency. The client believed that he was entitled to 5 days holiday pay. The client spoke to the site manager, however the issue was not resolved.

The adviser offered practical assistance to contact the company via telephone, however there was no answer. The adviser went on to explain that the next step the client could take was to raise a grievance with the company. The adviser therefore assisted the client to write a grievance letter to the employment agency.

The client was informed that he should post the letter and that if he had not heard back from the agency within 14 days of the date of the letter, he should return to CAML for further assistance.

Case Study Five - PE21 8

Client attended CAML for assistance with a Personal Independence Payment appeal.

The client suffered from MS and was unable to confirm the number of good and bad days that her illness affected her. The illness is spontaneous and causes her to lose the use of her hand and legs as her limbs do not respond to what her brain is telling them to do.

The client feels that the Mandatory Reconsideration notice and the statement from the assessor was not a true reflection of what happened during the assessment at her home. The client feels that the true extent of her illness and how it affects her was not taken into account during the assessment.

The adviser explained the appeals process, including what would happen next with the claim. Practical assistance was provided by the adviser who helped the client to complete the appeal form (SSCS1).

The client was informed to return to CAML if she required further assistance.

Case Study Six - PE21 8

The client arrived at the appointment with a friend as she did not speak English. The client was very upset upon arrival. As the client did not speak English, DA Language Line was used as a means of interpretation.

The client stated that she had been living in a house but was asked to leave. The client therefore left the property. The client did not wish to discuss this issue further. The client's main concern was that upon leaving the property, she left behind some possessions including her passport and ID card. The client was unsure of when she left the property, but stated that it was some time ago.

The client had subsequently booked a trip to Lithuania and was due to leave within the week. The client was very upset as she had been back to her old house in order to collect her documents but they were not there.

The adviser informed the client that if she felt the other tenants had her passport, she should report this to the police. She would also need to cancel the passport to ensure that it was not used by someone else. The client's friend had a letter from the Jobcentre which showed her national insurance number and wished to know if the client could travel if she showed this document. The adviser informed the client that the letter was not sufficient and that a passport would be required.

The adviser confirmed with the client the documents required for travel by showing the client the Lithuanian embassy website. The adviser offered practical assistance to telephone the embassy in order to establish how the client could get a new passport and ID card. Unfortunately they were closed. The adviser provided the client with the contact number so that she could contact them the next day in order to arrange an appointment with a view to obtaining new documents.

The client was informed that she should return to CAML if she required further assistance.