

Citizens Advice Mid Lincolnshire  
**Report to  
Boston Big Local**



**Reporting Period:**

1 January 2023 - 31 March 2023

**citizens  
advice**

**Mid Lincolnshire**

## The period in figures for Q4

Number of unique individuals given full advice within BBL Project

95

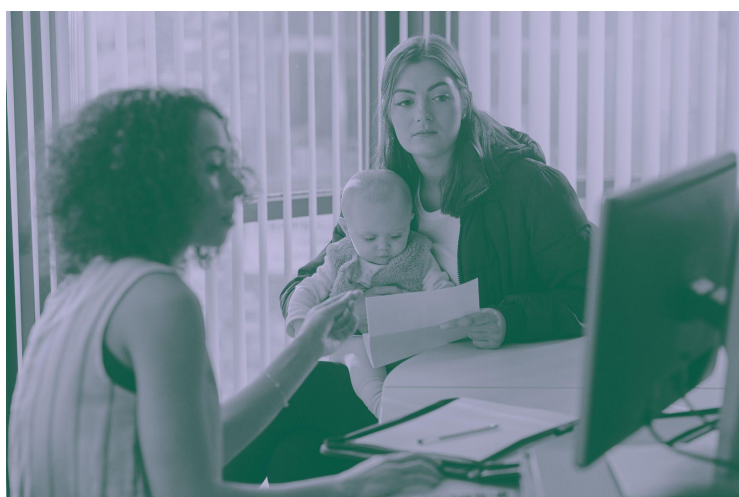
### Figures for Q4

During Q4 our top enquiry areas continue to be benefit or debt related with the top issues being Personal Independence Payments and council tax arrears. We continue to receive many requests for benefit checks as our clients struggle to keep up with the increasing cost of household expenses.

In addition to the above, during quarter four we have seen an increase in those presenting with family and relationship queries, many of which relate to divorce and separation. This increase could demonstrate a knock on effect of the increase in the cost of living and the current pressures upon households.

Household fuel continues to be a concern for clients in particular issues relating to clients being unable to top up prepayment meters. This results in clients facing a fuel crisis i.e no heat, no light, no hot water and being unable to prepare a hot meal.

Many clients have been referred for charitable support via food banks, grants and fuel vouchers.





## Client Feedback

*'I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for helping me these past few months. Your help and advice was invaluable. Without your help I couldn't have done it!'*

*'Everyone was so helpful, understanding and patient. So a big thank you again to the wonderful team.'*

*'I just want to say thank you for your help today - the service was very helpful and professional.'*



## Local Trends

We are experiencing significant increases in the need for crisis support such as charitable support and food bank referrals. People struggling the most are having to choose whether to eat or heat their homes - many can't afford to do either. Even though we are through the worst of winter, things continue to be incredibly difficult for households.

As stated above, during quarter four Personal Independence Payments continue to be the top benefit enquiry area, with many clients requesting assistance with the completion of application forms as they are unable to do this without help.

Council tax arrears remains the top debt enquiry area, with many clients reporting bailiff action. However, although council tax arrears appear to be the most problematic area of debt for our clients, this does not mean that the same clients are not struggling with other debts such as fuel and credit cards. Our reports show that the number of issues relating to fuel and credit card debts has increased considerably.

## Outlook for next quarter

During the next quarter we envisage that energy concerns will continue to

increase. As much as warmer weather is approaching, the removal of the Government's Energy Bill Support Scheme will have an impact, putting even more pressure on household budgets.

The office for national statistics states that UK food prices are rising at the fastest rate in over 40 years. High numbers of food bank referrals are therefore likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

Requests for assistance with benefit checks will continue to be a main theme of our work. Unfortunately for many, they are either not entitled or are already in receipt of all applicable means tested benefits. The difficulties in managing extremely tight budgets is likely to result in many becoming reliant on credit to pay for essentials.

Thank you for your ongoing support which enables us to continue to provide our vital services within our community.