

**TO EACH MEMBER OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

02 September 2021

Dear Councillor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE- TUESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2021

Further to the Agenda and papers for the above meeting, previously circulated, please find attached the following presentation:

Agenda Item	Description
7.	Citizens' Advice Bureau Presentation To consider the annual update on Citizens' Advice Bureau activity in the borough.

Should you have any queries regarding the above please contact Democratic Services on
Tel: 01684 272021

Yours sincerely

Head of Democratic Services



**North & West Gloucestershire
Citizens Advice**

- Offering free confidential
independent and impartial
advice in Cheltenham, Forest
of Dean, Gloucester and
→ Tewkesbury*



**citizens
advice**

www.gloscab.org.uk

- **Our aims**
 - To provide the advice people need for the problems they face.
 - To improve policies and practices that affect people's lives.
- **Our principles**
 - The Citizens Advice service provides free, confidential, independent and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.



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Our Pre- Covid service:

Our locations:

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- Tewkesbury Borough Council Offices
- Priors Park
- Bishops Cleeve
- Winchcombe
- Brockworth
- Northway
- Churchdown
- Cheltenham (town centre)
- Up Hatherley
- Gloucester (city centre)
- Cinderford
- Coleford
- Lydney
- Newent
- St Briavels



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Our Service from March 2020:

Employment status:

	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>2019/20</u>
• Employed	39.3%	38.3%
• Self-employed	4.7%	5.9%
• Carers	6.0%	6.0%
• Retired	9.8%	20.8%
• Permanently sick	21.7%	13.6%
• Not working	18.4%	15.5%



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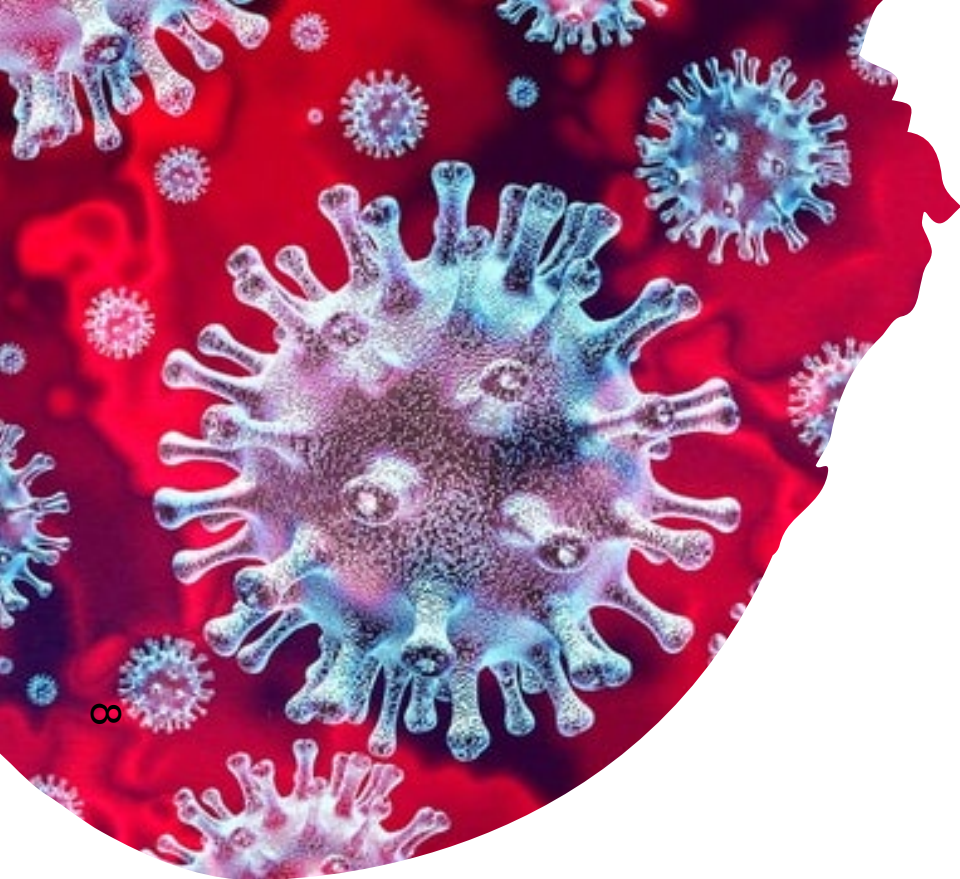
Disabilities:

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	<u>2021/21</u>	<u>2019/20</u>
• Physical disability	9.4%	10.1%
• Mental Illness.....	9.1%	8.6%
• Long term health.....	39.5%	22.4%
• Not disabled.....	42.1%	58.9%



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Top 6 issues during Covid:

- 2020/21: 3,664 (2019/20 – 3,370)
- Welfare benefits **803** (923)
- Universal Credit **336** (384)
- Debt **454** (702)
- Employment **465** (291)
- Relationships..... **360** (140)
- Housing..... **319** (83)



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Significant issues during the year:



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- Employment issues
- Clients facing immediate crisis – Food and Fuel vouchers
- Housing – concerns about eviction
- Universal Credit
- Relationship issues
- Complications of giving advice remotely



Our Service Post Covid

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Plans going forward:

- Gained what we have learnt – continue to develop telephone and email services
- Open face to face services – prioritizing most vulnerable
- Offering support via Food Bank
- Establishing network to ensure referrals for most in need
- Broaden our reach to offer more outreach services



Case study A - Background

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Young man with autism, severe mental health issues, including depression and anxiety. Client was referred by Community Wellbeing for help with his benefits.

- Problems with his Universal Credit (UC);
- Issue with Housing costs and ability to pay rent;
- Client hadn't applied for Council tax support
- Clients PIP entitlement wasn't correct;
- Client had debts with his energy bills.

Case study A - Outcomes

- Universal Credit increased by £341.92
- Backpayment of UC of £1000
- Secured additional PIP of £62.50 per week
- Worked with
 - DWP to increase housing costs by £108 per month plus back pay £950
 - Helped client apply for Council Tax benefit
 - Applied to Trust Fund to pay off clients fuel debt
- Total annual income gain: £8,649
- Client said he felt less anxious following our help grateful for support



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Case study B - Background

Client single parent with two disabled children CI initially contacted us for her son who has multiple health issues and was unable to work more than a couple of hours a week.

- Client's adult child had issues with PIP;
- Client on low income supporting her adult child;
- Problem with council tax;
- Client struggling to support her two disabled children and manage work.

Case study B - Outcomes

- We identified that he could get UC and helped him make the claim. £324.84 per month
 - Helped son complete work capability assessment and as a result - £343.63 per month
 - Assisted son to apply for and appeal PIP – received award of high rate both daily living and mobility - £278.46 per month
 - Helped client herself apply for UC, reduce her hours, giving more time for caring responsibilities
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- Total annual income gain for household: £11,363.16



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