

**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.





Our Pre- Covid service:

Our locations:

- 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%



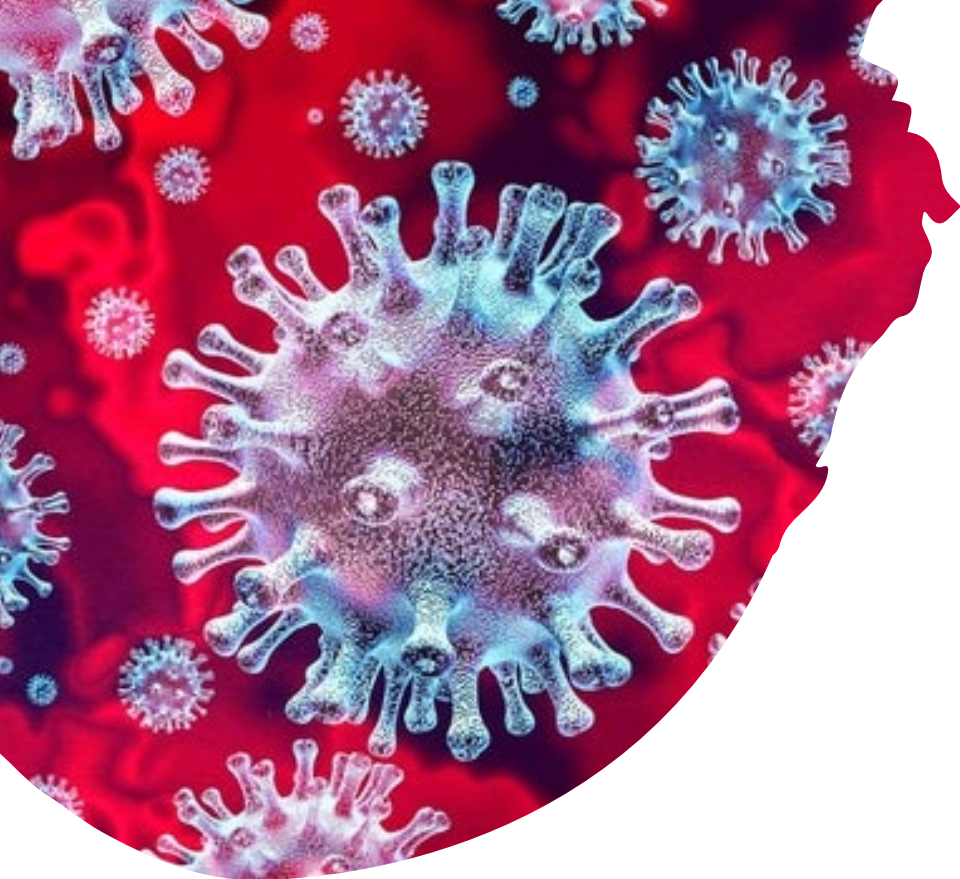
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Disabilities:

	<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:

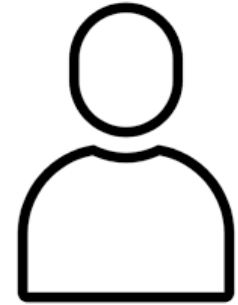
- Employment issues
- Clients facing immediate crisis – Food and Fuel vouchers
- Housing – concerns about eviction
- Universal Credit
- Relationship issues
- Complications of giving advice remotely



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Our Service Post Covid



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

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.

A blue speech bubble containing the text 'citizens advice' in white lowercase letters.

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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
-
- Total annual income gain for household: £11,363.16



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