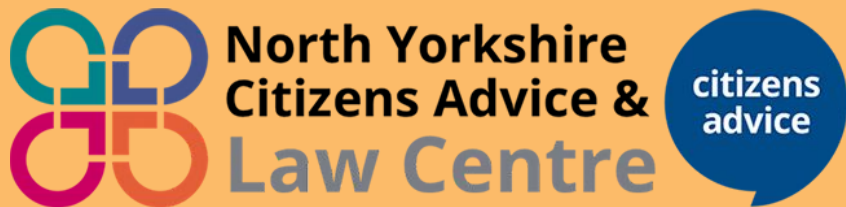


Foodbank Projects



Charlotte Wild and Jack
McKenzie, Foodbank
Project team

About the Citizens Advice service

The Citizens Advice service is a network of around 300 local Citizens Advice across England and Wales, all of which are registered charities.

Citizens Advice itself is also a registered charity, as well as being the membership organisation for local Citizens Advice.

Citizens Advice aims to:

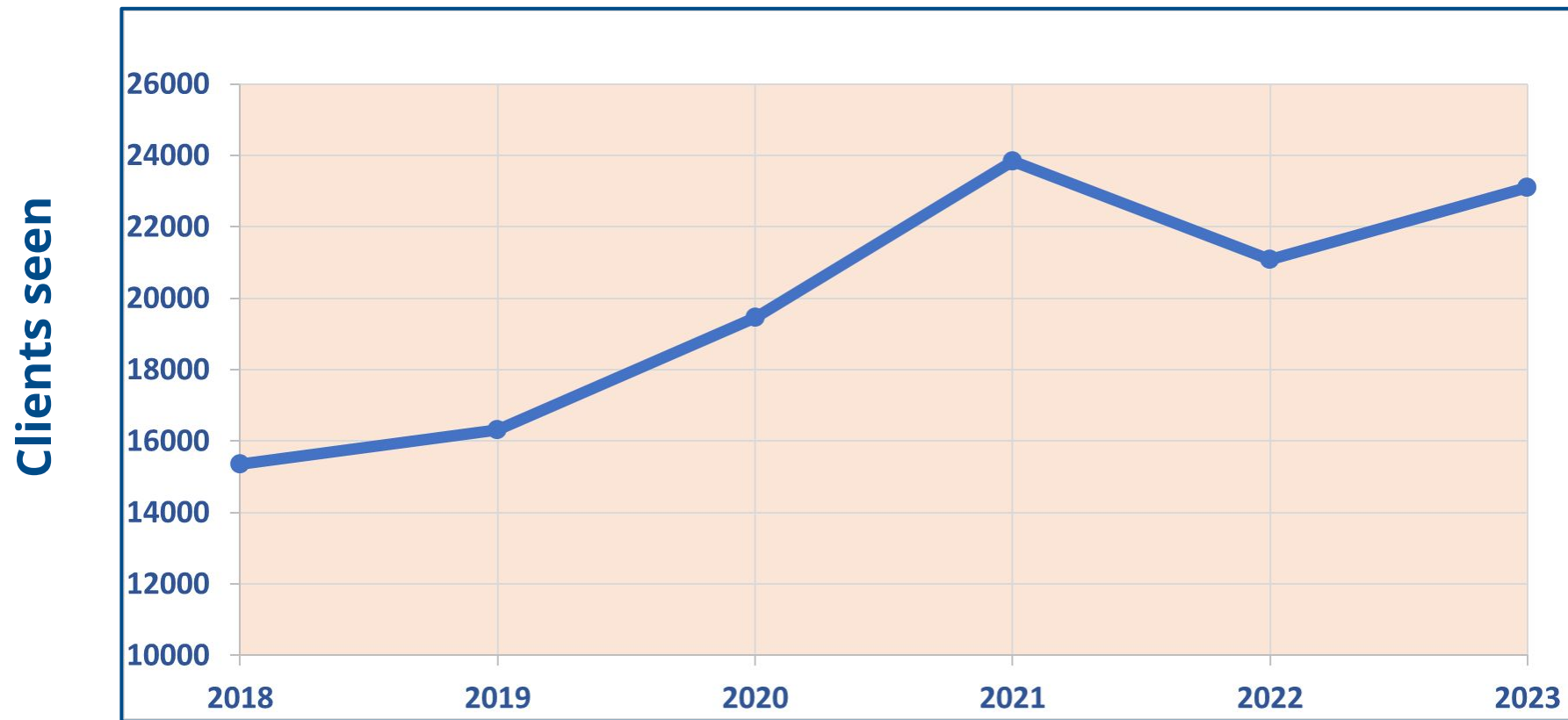
- **provide the advice people need for the problems they face**
- **improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.**

Aims and principles

- **Independent** – We will always act in the interests of our clients, without influence from any outside bodies
- **Impartial** – We don't judge our clients or make assumptions about them. Our service is open to everyone, and we treat everyone equally
- **Confidential** – We won't pass anything on that a client tells us, or even the fact they have visited, without the client's permission
- **Free** – No-one has to pay for any part of the service we provide.

As a service, we use the data from our clients to help us identify emerging issues, understand what is causing them and make recommendations on how to fix the problems.

Demand for our service





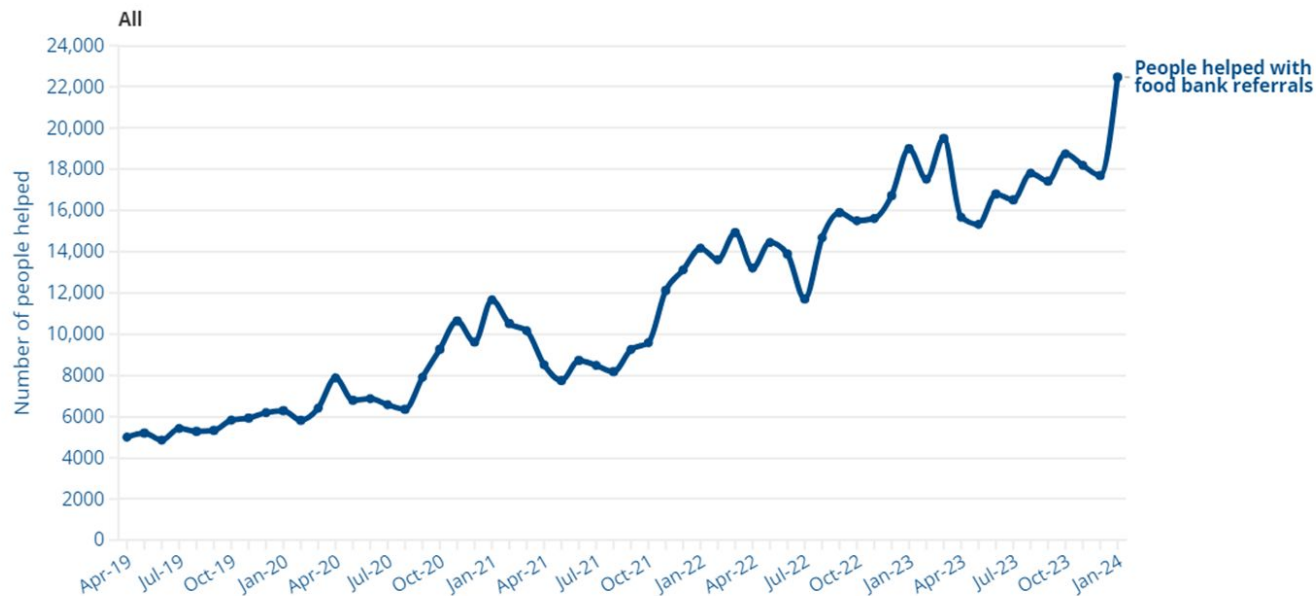
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Rising energy and rent costs meant that the crisis got worse at the start of 2024, as we helped a record number of people with food bank referrals.

Use the dropdowns to explore how many people we are helping with food bank referrals for different demographic groups.

The number of people we're helping with food bank referrals each month

All

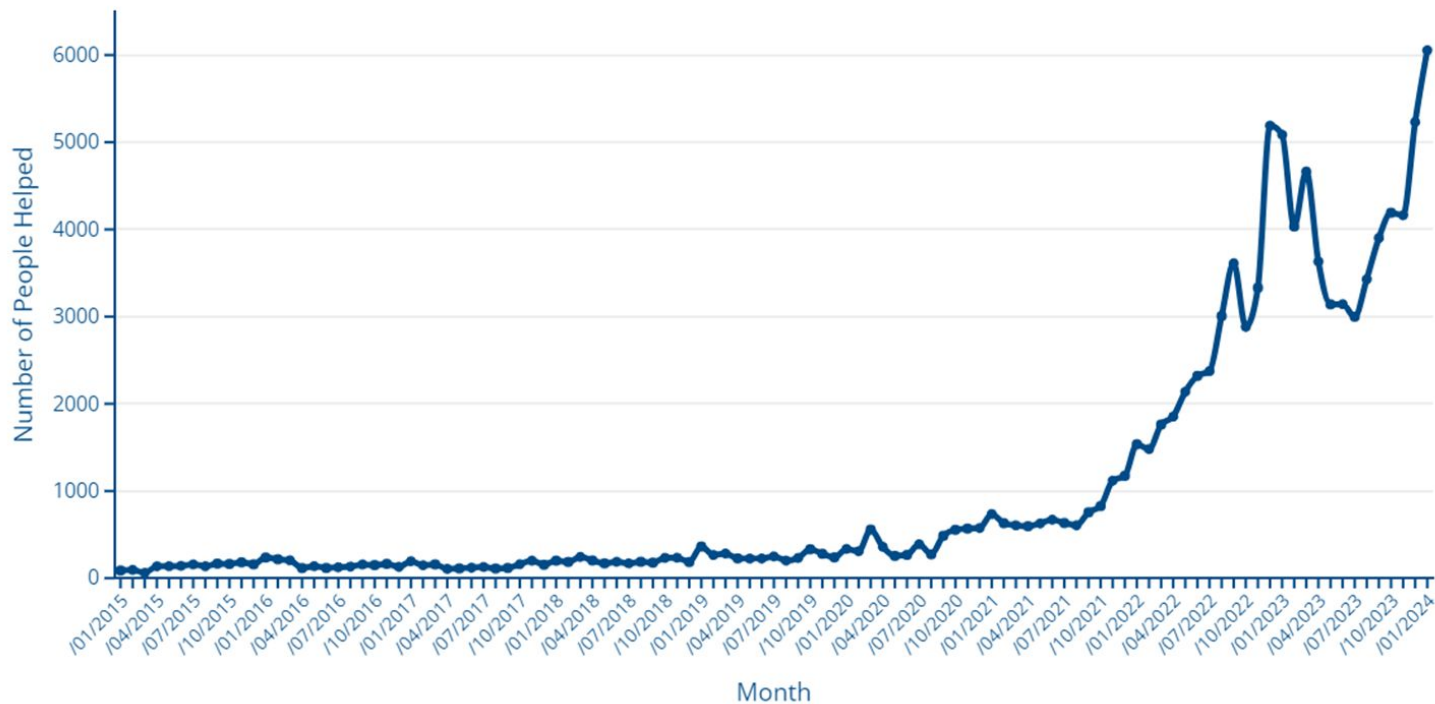




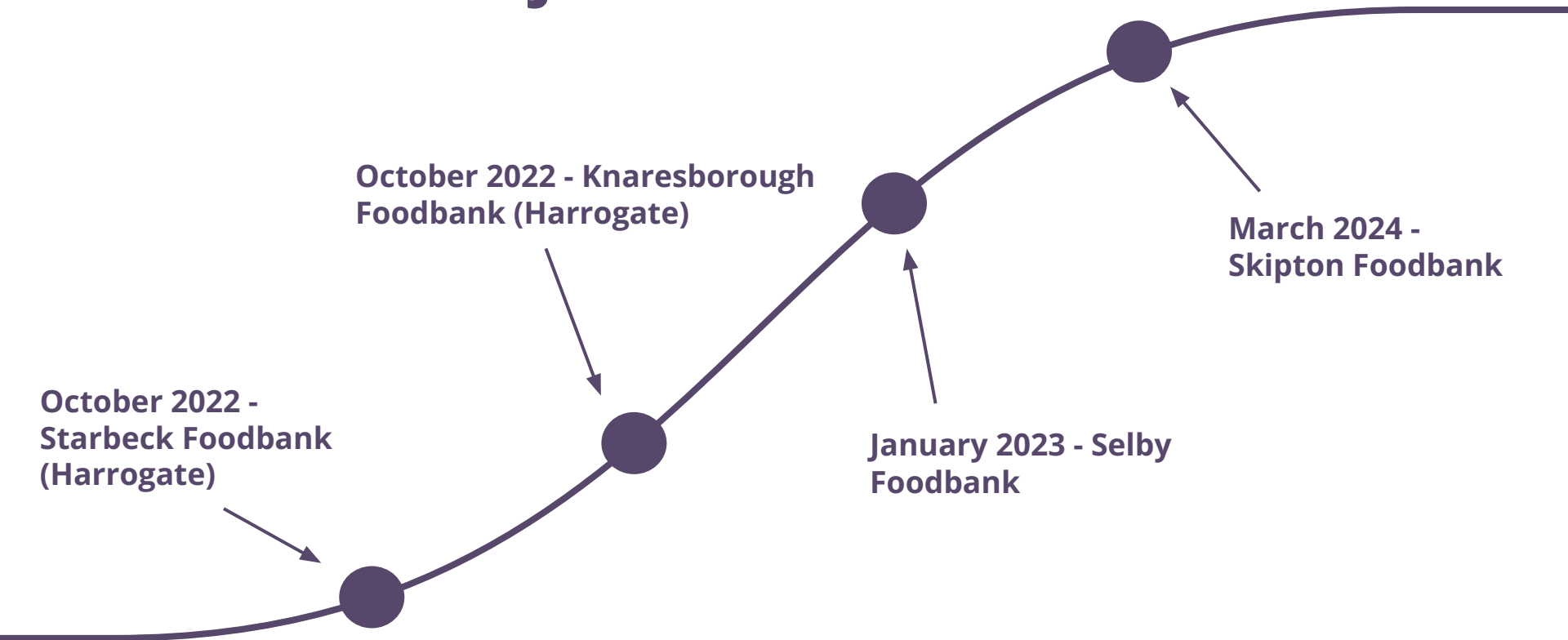
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In January 2024, we helped a record number of people who couldn't afford to top up their prepayment meter, as record numbers struggle with rising energy prices and the cold weather.

The number of people we've seen who can't afford to top up their prepayment meter each month



Foodbank Projects timeline



Foodbank Projects: clients seen

In 2023, we helped **675** people with **926** issues.

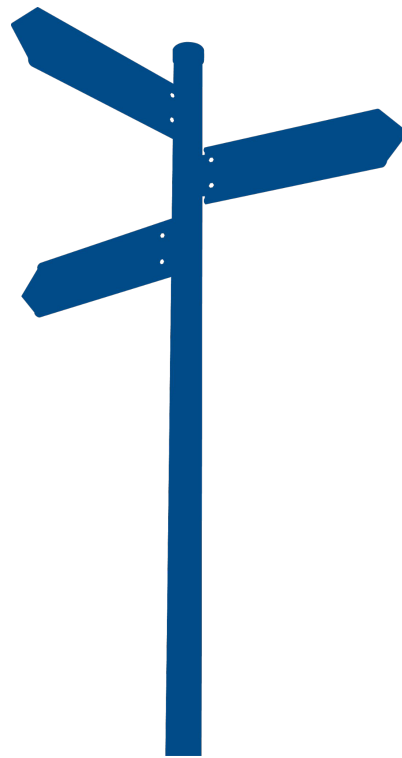
This amounted to **£1,585,105** worth of annual financial gains for clients.



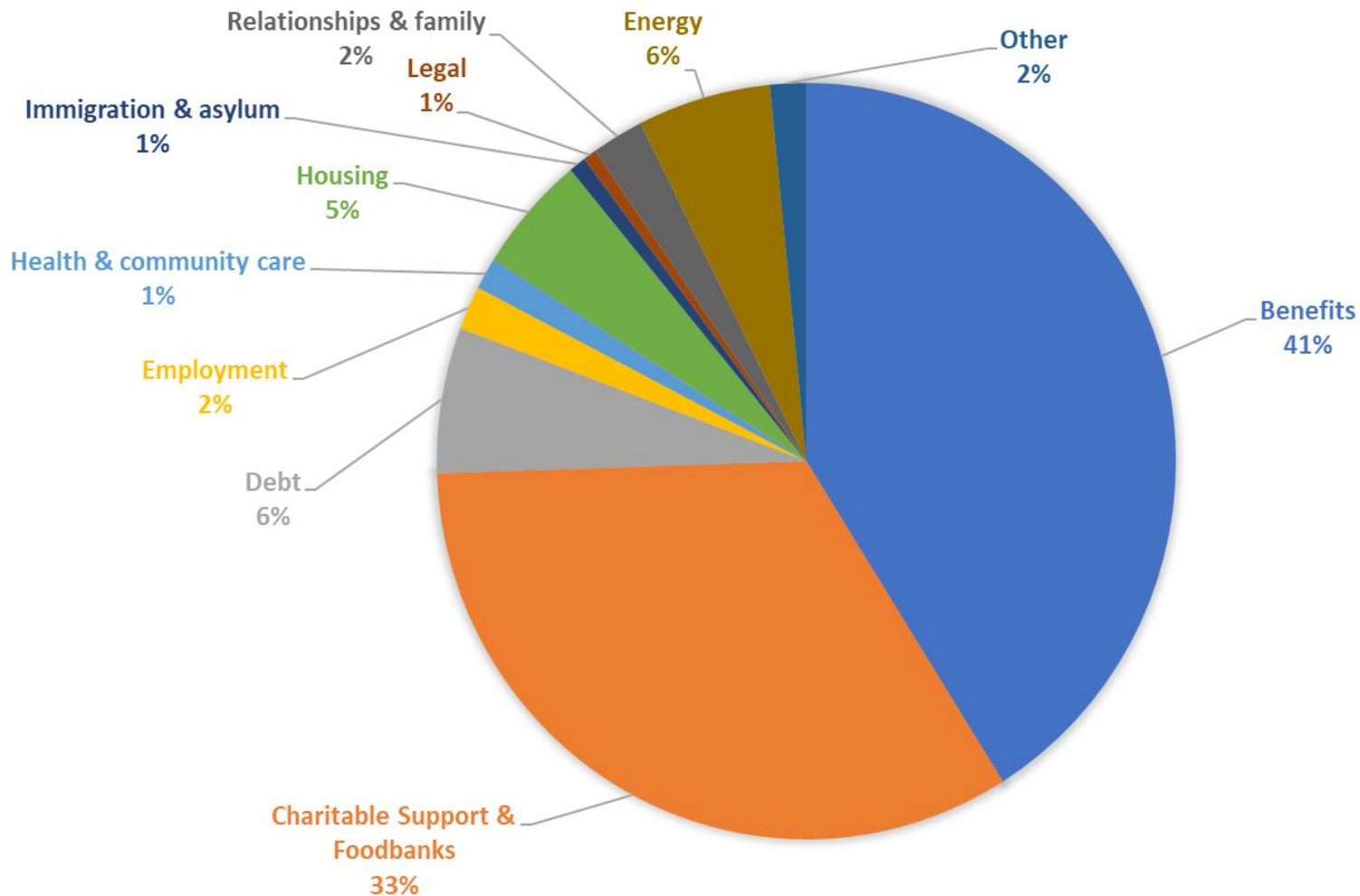
What do we help with?

We give advice on a wide range of issues including:

- Debt and money
- Welfare Benefits
- Employment
- Housing
- Family
- Consumer
- Energy
- Discrimination



Issues we helped with in 2023



Our services

- Foodbank Advisers are fully trained Generalist Advisers
- **Warm & Well in North Yorkshire** - help for those experiencing difficulties paying energy bills or keeping their home warm
- **Welfare Benefits**
- **Debt**
- **Household Support Fund**

Specialist advice and Law Centre

We can offer support from our specialist caseworkers in the areas of Discrimination, Family Law, Employment, Housing and Immigration.

They can provide legal help and advice to those who need it to solve problems in their everyday lives, as well as support for those representing themselves in court.



How we've been able to help

Background and issue

When we first met Esther in the Foodbank, she was reluctant to divulge information about herself and refused any advice. Our adviser let her know that we would still be there if she was to come to the Foodbank again and that we were keen to help her.

Once we had gained her trust she opened up about her situation - she was sofa surfing/sleeping in her car after she had fled domestic violence in her previous home. As well as dealing with severe emotional trauma, she was facing liver disease and knee/mobility issues.

How we've been able to help

Advice and outcome

Firstly we made sure action was being taken regarding her housing situation. Esther confirmed she had applied for social housing and was receiving help from IDAS to get this sorted. We reviewed her income and found she was only in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (totalling £125 a week) - we submitted an application form for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and we are confident she will qualify for the enhanced rate for mobility and daily living.

Esther also told us she had £2000 worth of debt and was still receiving regular phone calls from credit card companies which was adding to her stress. We referred her to our Debt Caseworker who arranged Breathing Space and submitted an application for a Debt Relief Order on her behalf.

When we last spoke to Esther, she said that previously she had not wanted to be here, but now she is getting support and feels happy to still be alive.

How we've been able to help

Background and issue

When we met Owen in the Foodbank, he told us he was struggling because he was currently homeless and staying with a friend. He was helping them pay part of the rent but he didn't get any housing allowance from Universal Credit (UC) as there was no legal agreement in place.

Moreover, his attempts to secure accommodation through the council had been hindered by old debts from two decades ago; clearing these arrears was a prerequisite for any housing assistance. However, there was a glimmer of hope when Owen was accepted for a privately rented property, only to be confronted with the obstacle of fronting the initial costs, which were beyond his means.

How we've been able to help

Advice and outcome

We spoke to the DWP to ensure any housing expenses would be factored into his upcoming UC payments and we applied for a discretionary housing payment (DHP) to help with the initial costs. At first his application was declined, citing that they only help with deposits but our adviser challenged this, explaining how this situation was negatively impacting Owen's mental health and the decision was overturned. They awarded him the full £250 deposit and the first month's rent of £375. They also said that they would sort out the Council Tax Reduction for his new property and he'd get a 75% reduction on his bill.

Throughout this, Owen flagged concerns that his anxiety and depression were getting worse. We logged a change of circumstances regarding his Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and helped fill out his PIP form where we anticipate he will move from the daily living standard rate to the enhanced rate.

Owen said he was grateful for our support and the positive outcomes we were able to secure together.

Thank you

How to stay in touch

Adviceline: 0808 278 7900

Warm and Well in North Yorkshire: 01609 767 555

Website: cany.org.uk

X (Twitter): @CANorthYorks

Facebook: @CitizensAdviceNorthYorkshire

