

Our Help through Hardship helpline

How we're helping people in crisis with financial problems

In 2020 Citizens Advice partnered with the Trussell Trust to launch a new phone line to support people with emergency food and advice support.

Our free helpline offers personalised support to people struggling to afford the basics, providing the tools, advice and connections needed to help them towards a future where they have enough money for essentials. We expect demand to increase as the long-term effects of the pandemic on people's incomes are felt.

The reach and reputation of Citizens Advice enables us to help people from diverse communities and give specialist advice on a range of problems that may have led to food poverty.



- **Over 30,000 calls answered**
- since April, and at least 40,000 (including 15,000 children) were fed.



- **80% of our helpline callers**
- said that they'd been affected by the pandemic, in some way. This compares to 56% in all Citizens Advice services.



- **2 in 5 people in crisis**
- were helped with the underlying problems which were causing food poverty and at least 1 in 10 with their debt problems.



- **1 in 3 people**
- had a debt problem before they called the helpline and 96% said their problem had worsened in the last year.



- **54% of people**
- accessed the helpline for the first time. The main drivers for new users was lost income during the pandemic, particularly through redundancy and furlough.



- **We partnered with the British Red Cross**
- so we could help clients gain access to their hardship fund and administered a direct income gain of at least £200,000 to people who most needed it.

"I'm a carer for my two disabled children and I can't work. I've called the helpline around 4 times since May last year. Each time I was supported with a different area that helped maximise my income.

My first call dealt with my benefits situation and helped me with a Universal Credit claim. I was then given a full debt assessment on the helpline and this was followed up by a session with my local Citizens Advice to help manage my debts."

— **Helpline client**

citizensadvice.org.uk



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