



# East Renfrewshire Citizens

## Advice Bureau Weekly Update

15/01/2021

### ERCAB Update

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to huge changes in operations for work places across the country. I'm proud to say that at ERCAB we acted quickly, transitioning to remote working for our advisers, and we are open for face to face advice in essential case for vulnerable clients.

Those quick changes meant that we could still deliver help to people in our community, and we've issued 10436 pieces of advice since the beginning of April until the end of November.

These figures compare well our 2019/20 figures where we helped people and unlocked £4.1 million in gains for people.

By being part of a national network, we can share best practices that helps us serves people in local area but as an independent charity in our own right we organise our CAB in a way that best meets the needs of the community of East Renfrewshire.

Across the network two thirds of the people seeking advice during the pandemic have never sought help from a CAB before. That brings new challenges but we are more than ready to meet them.

Being part of that wider network means that people in East Renfrewshire are getting advice they can trust in a way that suits them.

That means we can help people and offer advice in a way that best suits their needs – whether it's people who can self-help online or vulnerable clients with complex need for whom there is no substitute for face to face advice, we can meet all needs as a local charity focused on our communities needs while still being part of something bigger than people in our area can identify and recognise. We know people trust our brand, and 95% of clients would recommend the network's services to someone else.

Investing in CABs is investing in people and communities. As we put money back into the pockets of people in East Renfrewshire we give them the security and opportunity to live their lives, but also contribute to local, inclusive economic growth and wealth building with lots of this money staying in the local economy.

We're incredibly proud of the work we do in our community, and wanted to share with you how we have adapted to the pandemic. We know in the months and years to come the challenge to build back better after the pandemic will be a huge, but we can play a vital role in ensuring our community is a better place to live and work.

Teresa

In the first 2 weeks of the year, our phone lines have been exceptionally busy. In particular with a lot of first time contact with client's who have lost their job or are going to be made redundant and are looking for what benefits they may be entitled to, something of note might be that there's quite a few who are still falling through the cracks of the support system; this is especially true of the newly self-employed who aren't entitled to the SEISS and require benefits checks. We continue to receive a high number of calls concerning the furlough scheme and whether employees are eligible for that.

### Fuel Voucher Scheme

ERCAB have been extremely busy since the fuel voucher scheme was reintroduced at the end of 2020. We are incredibly glad to announce that we paid out a total of £4000 in the last few weeks of 2020 and the start of 2021. The fuel voucher scheme has come to an end for now.

For any further advice on gas and electricity please contact: Mark Parsons on **07539378806**.

### Good News Story

Client approached the bureau for assistance with a Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) after he completed the initial claim form himself and was refused the benefit. The client sought assistance completing a MR as he did not know what information was required. A telephone appointment was carried out with the client to discuss his health conditions and how these affected his daily living and mobility. The MR was drafted and posted to the client who was happy with the information contained. The MR was then posted to the DWP to have a look at. An award letter was received two months later detailing that they had changed the decision and would now award the client a Standard Rate of both components of PIP. Client would receive backdated payment of **£2,296.70** and then received further payments for each component. **CFG calculated - £4,331.60**

The client was called with this update to let him know we had been successful in challenging the decision. The client was very thankful for this information and grateful for the assistance they received. Client would contact the bureau again in the future should they need any further assistance.

### Big Energy Week

East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice is currently participating in the Big Energy Saving Week. We are here to provide support for Households in vulnerable situations, who can often find the energy market confusing.

Contact us on: Tel – **0141 881 2032**

Please feel free to distribute the contact details for our advisers provided on our Facebook page. Clients can also get in contact with the bureau via:

Email [bureau@eastrenfrewshirecab.casonline.org.uk](mailto:bureau@eastrenfrewshirecab.casonline.org.uk)

Tel - **0141 881 2032**