

CANF Newsletter

Citizens Advice New Forest Newsletter

May 2019

Our New Universal Credit Service Help To Claim

On 1st April 2019, Citizens Advice launched a new service called "Help to Claim", to support people applying for Universal Credit in the New Forest.

CANF will now be able to support people submitting their applications so they may receive their first payment, with help tailored to the individual either face-to-face or over the phone **0800 144 8444 (England)**.

A recent survey by Citizens Advice found that a third of people the charity has helped have struggled to provide the evidence needed to complete their Credit claim. Our new Universal Credit advisor, Claire Feltham, talking about the difficulties of the new Universal Credit system says: *"If you have no digital skills, online applying may be difficult. My role is to support people with online applications"*.

Claire has also said what she is looking forward to in her new role at CANF: *"I am looking forward to being able to really help the people who need support, and to being part of something current that affects so many people"*.

The new Universal Credit is a combination of six benefits into one including Jobseekers Allowance and Working Tax Credits. The new system is now fully rolled out across the UK and it is expected several million people in England and Wales will receive Universal Credit.



Claire Feltham

Help to Claim
Co-ordinator

citizens
advice

Get help applying for Universal Credit

We can help with the early stages
of a Universal Credit claim, from the
application through to the first full payment.



Call us for free:
0800 144 8 444

Advisers are available 8am to 6pm,
Monday to Friday.

Get support online or find your nearest face to face
service at: citizensadvice.org.uk/helpclaim

Help to Claim is a dedicated service from Citizens Advice.
It's free, independent, confidential and impartial.

In this issue:

- Help to Claim — helping people make online claims
- Working with CITA to transform our service
- New Outreach service for Fordingbridge
- Top Tips for making a successful Universal Credit claim



Client Feedback

“Dear Citizens Advice, I cannot thank you personally, enough for the help you have given me. I wanted to let you know that I could not have done this without your help!”

“Very helpful with all the staff being professional in their work”

“Just wanted you to know how grateful my Dad and I are for all you have done”

Digital Transformation

‘Virtual IT Director’ Atul Hiranwar came to CANF in March on a two day visit to help us implement improvements to our overall IT setup and to understand how we provide our services. He helped to give us ideas on how to implement new technologies to better communicate what we do at CANF.

Atul has said about our steps in this direction: *“It is important that organisations, especially charities like Citizens Advice New Forest, who provide such a vital service to the community, make full use of technology. It is heartening to see CANF taking the necessary steps in this direction which will most certainly enhance their reach and impact, benefits of which will be seen by the community they serve”*.

Atul is a volunteer for CITA (Charities IT Association), who provide IT help for many charities with free services that allow them to become more effective through technology.

Alison Talbot, CANF Chief Officer, here below with Atul, says, “The couple of days with Atul have helped build our technological confidence at CANF. With lots of talk about ‘the cloud’, we believe we will now be able to reach more people and places than ever before!”



New Outreach service at Fordingbridge Library

CAB welcomes clients to service at Fordingbridge library

Citizens Advice New Forest opened a new service at Fordingbridge library starting Wednesday 8th May 2019.

The Citizens Advice team provides a service from 10.00 to 14.00 hrs every Wednesday from 8th May. The service is free, impartial and confidential and there for anyone in the Fordingbridge area and surrounds who needs information and advice.

Alison Talbot, Chief Officer for Citizens Advice New Forest praised Jim Sanders, the Ringwood office manager, and his team of volunteers for their hard work to build a strong partnership with Hampshire County Council library service which has made this new service possible:

“They have done a brilliant job in developing our advice services in the library and it is great that they now extend what they have done in Ringwood to other parts of the New Forest. It’s very important too for our clients: it can take a lot of courage for clients to make the first step to seek out our services, and we hope that by offering them such a comfortable, pleasant environment, we can encourage them to talk to us before they reach crisis point.”

Last year, Citizens Advice New Forest helped 7,880 clients with over 15,000 different problems, Benefits & Tax credits was the category of advice in highest demand, followed by Housing, Debt, Employment and Relationships. 37% of clients in the period had a disability or long term health condition.

People can drop into the new service at Fordingbridge library or book an appointment via the Adviceline service **0300 3309 009**



Are you ready for Universal Credit?



Top Tips for universal credit.

Here are Citizen Advice New Forest's top tips for claiming the new Universal Credit:

- **Don't be afraid to ask for help**—if you are a New Forest resident contact Citizens Advice New Forest: **0300 3309 009**
- **Have the right information at hand** before making your claim.
- You will need:
 - Your bank account details
 - An email address
 - Information about your housing situation
 - Details about your income
 - Details of any savings
 - Details of any childcare
- **You will have to prove your identity.** You can do this by having a driver's licence, passport or debit/credit card. If you don't have these things **don't panic**. 'Help to Claim' can help with your online verification so get in touch on the number shown.
- Universal credit is payed monthly, so **organise your household bills to work from monthly payments.**
- **Don't delay making your claim.** There is no back dating with universal credit, so any delays will result in less money reaching you.

Contact Us

Looking for advice?
You can call us on
0300 3309 009

or look at our website:

citizensadvice.org.uk

Follow us:

[@CABNewForest](https://twitter.com/CABNewForest)



[@NewForestCitizensAdvice](https://twitter.com/NewForestCitizensAdvice)



We are a local charity, working in partnership with other organisations who are able to offer help and support to those in need. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

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