

Research and Campaigns Trustees Report July 2025 to August 2025

Report by: Jacqui Clack

Date: 30th August 2025

Training: I completed Mole Valley Citizens Advice in House Debt Training on 14th July.

Short Term Research & Campaigns Volunteer: Lucy, our short-term research volunteer, has been carrying out research among the 16 to 25 age group in both Dorking and Leatherhead with my support. This has involved taking out a questionnaire into the High Street and parks and at local community events, in addition to leaving questionnaires at Leatherhead Employment Hub, and a local library and also sending out an online questionnaire to Leatherhead Youth Project.

Just under 60 questionnaires have been completed and a full report of the results will be completed by 11th September in time for the final wrap up meeting with Mole Valley Citizens Advice's CEO on 17th September.

Contact with Elected Officials: Letters were sent to Helen Maguire MP and Chris Coughlan MP on 21st May with the headline - ***Child Poverty Strategy - insight from Citizens Advice Mole Valley*** – Chris Coughlan sent a very comprehensive email to Mole Valley CEO on 8th August with the following comments:

I deeply appreciate Citizens Advice Mole Valley reaching out on behalf of the families you serve in our constituency, and I'm particularly struck by your statistics showing that over 600 clients visited you last year seeking charitable support - representing over 4% of your total clients.

And

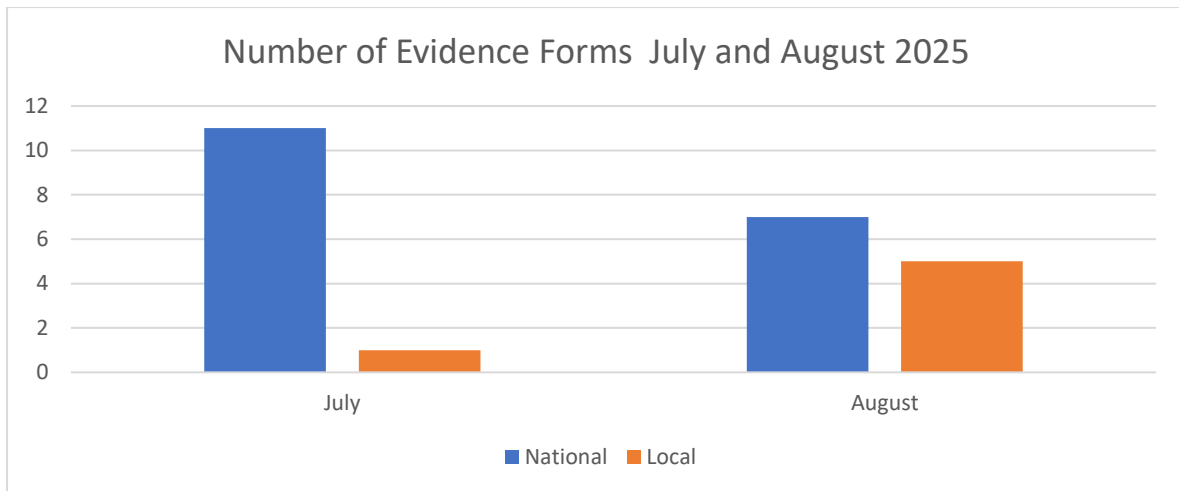
Please do keep me informed of any developments in this area, and I welcome the opportunity to hear more about the challenges you're seeing on the ground. Thank you for the vital work Citizens Advice Mole Valley does in supporting families in our constituency during such difficult times.

This is a very encouraging response. The Minister replied on 21 August, passing on his thanks to CAMV for raising the issue.

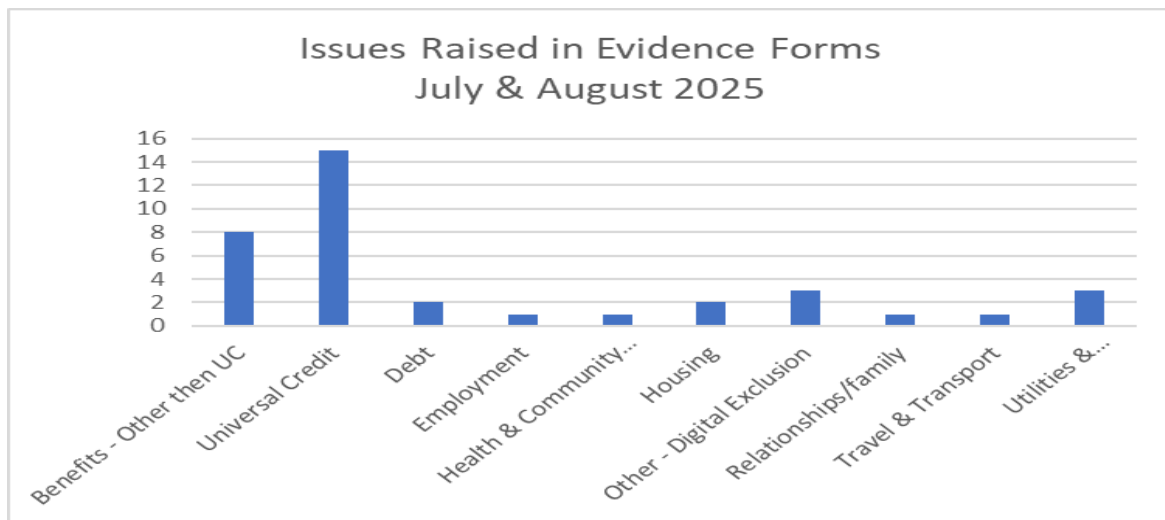
Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Data Gathering: I will re-start gathering monthly data on the cost of private rented accommodation to compare these costs against the Local Housing Allowance Rates permitted by the Government in September, once our student volunteers' time with Mole Valley Citizens Advice comes to an end.

Surrey Research & Campaigns Group: next meeting will be on 17th September. There were no meetings in July and August.

Issues and Evidence Forms: From 1st July to 31st August a total of 24 evidence forms were submitted. The chart below indicates the number of evidence forms completed related to calls for evidence on national issues of concern compared with local issues.



However, during July and August 2025, the 24 evidence forms picked up a total of 37 different issues clients presented with, as multiple problems can be recorded within a single evidence form.



The key areas where evidence forms were raised by advisors remain Welfare Benefits and Universal Credit. Within issues related to Universal Credit, just under half were related to Managed Migration, where clients are having to move from old style benefits onto Universal Credit, which makes demands on the client that they are not used to and often are unable to manage without support.

While only two evidence forms were raised in July and August related to Debt, both were regarding rent arrears leading to potential loss of accommodation.

Digital Exclusion appears low as only three were raised with Digital Exclusion as the main topic, however a reading of the actual Evidence forms would increase the number of Digital Exclusion issues from 3 to 13 over the two-month period and are mainly seen within the subjects of applying for or managing benefit claims.

Local Research & Campaigns concerns: A total of 6 evidence forms were completed related to local issues in the Mole Valley area.

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A client with mobility disabilities needed to renew their Blue Badge but due to being digitally excluded was unable to complete the online renewal and had to make efforts to travel into Leatherhead to complete the renewal.

The landlord of a local HMO (House of Multiple Occupation) put the water bill into only one tenants name without advising them. The client was in large arrears before they found out what the landlord had done and this impacted their credit rating at the bank.

A total of three issues were raised by tenants of Clarion:

In order to carry out extensive repairs in a property, Clarion assisted the client to pack up their belongings and move to temporary accommodation. However, once the work was completed, the client's belongings were just left in boxes and no assistance was given with unpacking. The client complained to Clarion but nothing was done as a result.

With another client, Clarion HA sent out a Notice of Seeking Possession as soon as the tenant was in £500 rent arrears. However, as Universal Credit pays rent a month in arrears there is potential for a person to constantly be receiving Notice of Seeking Possession.

In another case, a client was not advised when they moved into a Clarion property who the energy supplier was and so had not received an energy bill for many months. Clarion then told Citizens Advice who the energy provider was but on further investigation it transpired it was a different energy supplier. This created complications for the client with making their ongoing payments and payments towards the arrears.