

# Devon Welfare Rights Unit



**A Citizens Advice Specialist 2nd Tier  
Welfare Benefits & Social Inclusion Service**

**Annual report 2010/2011**

## About Us

**Devon Welfare Rights Unit (DWRU)** was established in 1989 by Citizens Advice with funding from Devon County Council (DCC) to provide support services to Devon CABx and other public sector organisations whose work involves advising people about entitlement to benefits.

Devon Welfare Rights Unit is a second tier specialist welfare rights service. This means that we provide support services to organisations rather than directly to members of the public.

## What we offer

### **Specialist Consultancy and Casework Support**

Devon Welfare Rights Unit staff can assist advisers from the not for profit sector in Devon by identifying benefits or tax credits to which a person may be entitled and by providing assistance with challenging decisions.

### **Training**

Training is available to staff in organisations whose work involves contact with people who are claiming or might be entitled to benefits or tax credits.

### **Benefits Signposting Guide**

For a simple guide to the Benefits system and key Benefits Administration contacts for Devon see our website [www.dwru.org](http://www.dwru.org).

### **Advice to Families**

Co-ordination of Quids 4 Kids Benefits and Tax Credit Advice Service for Families of Children with Special Needs.

### **Advice to adults in Devon with a learning disability**

via the Making Work Pay Project in partnership with Devon Adult Care Services.

### **Adult Care Services**

Joint operational management of the Devon Fairer Charging Team in partnership with the CAB Service in Devon and Devon County Council Client Finance Services

## **Our Aims and Objectives:**

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

## Summary Review of Key Achievements 2010/11

We have had another very busy and productive year; continuing to work in close partnership with the Devon CAB Service and this year have been actively involved in the emerging single Devon CAB Service Strategy. The Unit has also participated in the formative period of the development of a new Devon Advice Network ([www.askdan.me](http://www.askdan.me)).

This year, we were responsible for the generation of additional benefit and tax credit entitlement worth in the region of £4m in total, representing a minimum investment to gain ratio of £1: £6. We also provided training to over 1,300 staff and volunteers from the not-for-profit sector in Devon.

DWRU has continued this year to contribute to strategic and policy development in Devon in the following areas:.

- Impact of Welfare Reform legislation
- Financial Assessments for Social Care Services
- Child and Family Poverty Strategy
- Tackling Worklessness Strategy
- Income maximization for families with children with a disability and for adults with a learning disability
- The development of the Devon Advice Network
- Devon Carers Strategy

The key challenges facing the unit are the same as those currently facing all of our public sector partners, but we remain confident that we can continue to build upon the strong foundations of partnership working within the areas of social and financial inclusion work in Devon. The aspiration is that the Unit will continue to make a vital contribution to the further development of this agenda. We intend to play a key part in enabling Devon's not-for-profit sector to be well equipped to assist people to navigate around the new system being introduced through the Welfare Reform Bill as well as helping to ensure that the most vulnerable groups in our communities are protected as much as possible from the forthcoming cuts in services and benefits.

As in previous years, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to Devon County Council, our primary funder, and all our partners. In addition, I would like to recognise the continued outstanding level of commitment and dedication demonstrated by the staff of Devon Welfare Rights Unit without whom our achievements during this period would simply not have been possible.

**Nora Corkery**  
**Manager, DWRU**



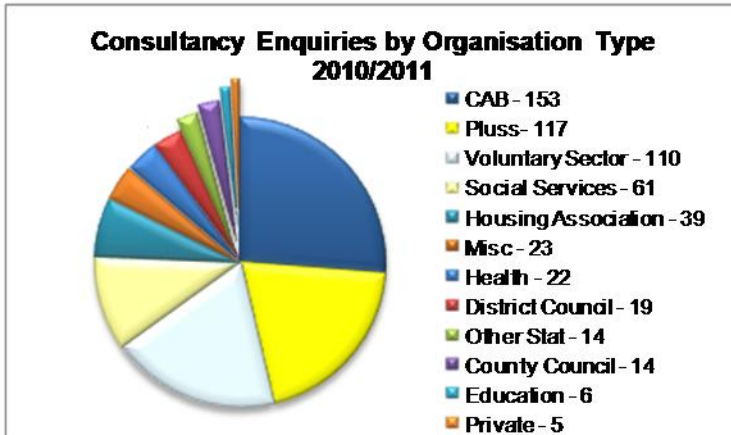
# Specialist 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier Support

## (i) Telephone / E-mail Consultancy Service

- 582 consultancy enquiries were received during 2010/2011
- 57 pieces of indirect casework were undertaken to support frontline advisers working on complex cases.



**Judy Francis**  
Unit Administrator



Top 6 Benefits Enquired About 2010/2011	
137	Disability Living Allowance
137	Job Seekers Allowance (income based)
134	Housing Benefit
127	Employment and Support Allowance (income based)
125	Council Tax Benefit
121	Income Support

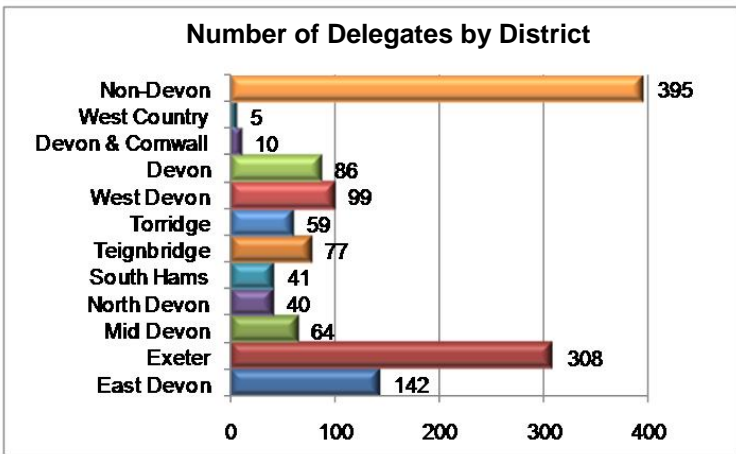
## (ii) Training Programme

- 112 training events were held during 2010/2011
- Over 1,300 delegates attended training during 2010/2011



**Llinos Davies**  
Training Administrator

Top 6 most popular courses during 2010/2011:	
1	Benefits Signposting
2	Making Work Pay
3	Employment and Support Allowance
4	Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance
5	Benefits Update and Welfare Reform
6	Benefits for Families with Children



*“ Excellent trainer, very informative, extremely useful, really interesting, good mix of exercises, discussions, slideshow and case studies.”*

*“ This was very helpful – our tutor was very well informed, experienced and related issues to texts/references/definitions/case law.”*

*“ Location easy to find, the prior info sent to my employer was excellent. Would recommend to other organisations.”*

*“ A structured and informative course which will assist in completion of both the DLA and CA forms with info which is specific and has clarity.”*

## Financial Inclusion and Support

### (i) Outcomes for families & children

#### Devon Quids 4 Kids Income Maximisation Service

(DWRU in partnership with Devon County Council and Teignbridge, North & Mid Devon & Torridge CABx.)

**467** referrals received during 2010/11, with total additional entitlements confirmed of **£1,122,638** for families with children with special needs in Devon.



**Jude Giddings**  
Welfare Rights Officer

#### Key achievements (to date) 2005-2011:

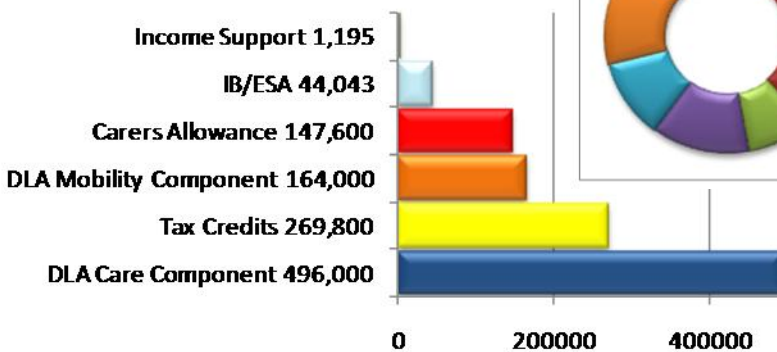
- **1293** families in Devon with a child with disabilities or additional needs awarded additional benefit income to an average of over **£5,400** per family
- Total additional benefit income raised between 2005 & 2011 more than **£7,080,000**

*"I would like to thank you for all the help that was given by Caroline in completing my son's DLA form. She was absolutely delightful and professional and I have been most impressed and indebted by the service you offer."*

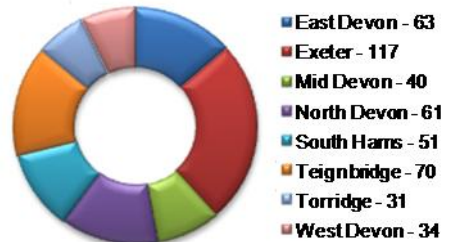
*"My husband and I wouldn't have been able to fill in the form for the DLA for our daughter. Clara helped me to understand how our daughter's complex emotional needs related to the questions on the form. She listened carefully and showed real empathy and sensitivity to our situation. Thank you for providing such a valuable service."*

*"I couldn't move for months with DLA form. Ros organised us in a few hours! She knew exactly what she was doing, she didn't forget any aspect of it. It took so much stress away! I could concentrate on my son again. The job she's done is so important."*

### Amount of Additional Benefit Gain by Type of Benefit



### Quids 4 Kids Referrals by Area



### Torbay Quids 4 Kids Pilot Project

(DWRU in Partnership with Torbay Council & Torbay Citizens Advice Bureau)

- Families with a child with special needs were awarded additional benefit income to an average of over **£4,000** per family
- Total additional benefit income raised **£57,140.20** (Projected additional benefit income £100,000)



### West Devon Income Maximisation Project

(DWRU in partnership with Barnardo's & Tavistock and Okehampton Children's Centres)

The main objective of this project was to provide information about benefits and tax credits to users of pre-school provision in West Devon. DWRU distributed over **1500** leaflets and information sheets and **250** posters through pre-school settings in West Devon; Gave talks at 25 pre-school venues; Provided direct advice to **33** individuals, through a dedicated telephone advice line and written information to over **50** people in West Devon.

## (ii) Outcomes for adults with disabilities

### Fairer Charging: Devon Joint Finance and Benefits Team

(DWRU in partnership with Devon County Council and Devon CAB Service)

This year, The Devon Joint Finance and Benefits Team process managed by DWRU delivered a financial assessment and benefit check service to 2454 Social Services service users in their own homes. 70% (1719) of these were visited within 15 days of the referral being received. A total of 782 households have been assisted to make 994 claims. The verified outcomes of 226 cases has yielded **£591,701.31** If the remaining 768 met with similar success the estimated total would be **£2,602,438.40**



Angela O'Brien  
Welfare Rights Officer

### Making Work Pay

(DWRU in partnership with Devon County Council Adult Community Services; Jobcentre Plus; Access To Employment; South Devon Carers Forum and Pluss)

This project aims to support a culture change by assisting people with a learning disability aged 18 – 30 move into work. Key achievements this year were:

- The % of service users in work after advice rose by **18% to 45%**
- **92%** of service users found the service useful
- **151** adults with learning disabilities aged 18-30 provided with 'better off in work' calculations (Over **400** better off in work calculations were completed)
- **10** service users secured an average additional benefit income of over **£4,000** each - total additional benefit income raised over **£40,000**



Vincent Willson  
Welfare Rights Officer

## Key Strategic Development Achievements

### CAB Devon

DWRU has been working closely in partnership with the Devon CAB Service throughout this year and contributed to the publication of a strategy report "A new single strategy for the Citizens Advice Service in Devon 2010 – 2014" in September 2010. Since then, DWRU has been working with CAB Devon in terms of exploring the potential for DWRU to take on a more central role in terms of workforce development across the service in the future.

### Devon Advice Network (DAN)

The DAN developed from the work of a Task and Finish Group of the Devon Strategic Partnership. The remit was to assist the integration of advice services in Devon, to improve public accessibility to high quality information and advice, improving financial and social inclusion. DWRU participated on the Task and Finish Group and contributed to the formation of the network. The key achievement was the formation of a constituted network. DAN's inaugural meeting was in June 2010; by April 2011 there were 20 signed-up member organisations, including all the key advice provision organisations in Devon. In addition, DAN had begun preparation for a public launch of its website [www.askdan.me](http://www.askdan.me) providing a public portal to advice and information. (DWRU has acted as the administrator for DAN).

# Devon Welfare Rights Unit

Suite 2, Quintana Gate, Bartholomew Street East, Exeter, EX4 3BH

**Quids for Special Kids:** 0300 5000 404

**Consultancy:** 0300 5000 505

(10.00am - 1.00pm Tuesday & Thursday)

**Training:** 01392 223827

**Working Age Carers:** 0300 5000 929

**Devon Welfare Rights Unit:**

Direct no: 01392 223 847 / Fax: 01392 223848

**e-mail:** [dwru@citizensadvice.org.uk](mailto:dwru@citizensadvice.org.uk)

[www.dwru.org](http://www.dwru.org)

**Patron HRH The Princess Royal**

**Chief Executive Gillian Guy**

Citizens Advice is an operating name of The National  
Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

VAT number 726 0202 76 Company limited by guarantee

Registered number 1436945

England Charity registration number 279057

Registered office Myddelton House, 115 –123 Pentonville  
Road, London N1 9LZ

