

Monthly Newsletter

■ [September 2026]



Image: 1st Connected Community day

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Welcome to our September Newsletter

We're delighted to welcome Aiman, our new Chief Executive Officer, to Citizens Advice Hillingdon.

As we move into autumn, residents continue to face pressures from the cost of living alongside changes that may affect their rights and entitlements. In this edition, we'll share how our specialist services are supporting people across Hillingdon, important updates you need to know, and how we're continuing to bring advice directly into our communities.



This Month at Citizens Advice Hillingdon



A welcome to our new CEO

Read the message from
our new CEO.



Updates from Foodbank project

 Listen to our Foodbank
Project Lead, Vivian Oluka.



Community Connected Day

 Our Community
Connected Day brings advice
closer to you.

A Message from Aiman, our new CEO



Hello, my name is Aiman Elal and I am delighted to have joined Citizens Advice Hillingdon as CEO.

I have spent the past few years leading Citizens Advice Hounslow and am looking forward to getting to know the people and communities of Hillingdon. In my first few weeks, I have already enjoyed meeting colleagues and local partners and hearing about the work they do.

My priority is to make sure people across Hillingdon can turn to us when they need advice, feel listened to and get the support they need to move forward.

I am excited to build on the team's work, strengthen our local partnerships, and find new ways to reach people who may not know we are here for them.

I look forward to meeting many of you soon.

Food bank / CAH partnership

Working Together to Support Hillingdon Families

Hillingdon Foodbank is currently supporting around 80–100 families every week, providing emergency food alongside essentials including clothing, hygiene products and support for children and young people.

Our Foodbank Advice Project works alongside this immediate support to help residents tackle some of the wider issues contributing to financial hardship. Our advisers can help with debt, housing, welfare benefits and the rising cost of living – helping people move beyond immediate crisis towards greater stability.

Our Foodbank Project Lead, **Vivian Oluka**, recently spoke to **Akash Radio** about the project and how getting the right advice at the right time can make a lasting difference.

Can you help? Hillingdon Foodbank particularly needs donations including long-life milk, cereal, rice, tinned meat, tinned fruit and vegetables, soup, noodles and toiletries.

Individuals and businesses can also support through donations, volunteering and workplace initiatives.

Read the full story, find out how to donate and listen to Vivian's Akash Radio interview on our website. For help with workplace issues, listen to Citizens Advice Hillingdon on **Akash Radio**. **ਕੰਮ ਵਾਲੀ ਥਾਂ ਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ? ਸਲਾਹ ਅਤੇ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਅਕਾਸ਼ ਰੇਡੀਓ 'ਤੇ Citizens Advice Hillingdon ਵਾਲਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣੋ। | Akash Radio | Facebook**

Community Connected Day

Connected Communities – Bringing Advice Closer to You

A huge thank you to The National Lottery Community Fund, whose funding made our Connected Communities Project possible, helping us bring advice into trusted spaces and reach communities across Hillingdon.

Our final CAH x REAP Connected Communities event was a fantastic way to bring the project together:

- 90 advice issues
- 24+ attendees at our Employment Rights session

We reached a diverse community, including refugees, recognised refugees, people with settled status and residents from a range of ethnic backgrounds, providing practical support around benefits and employment rights. Our employment session helped people understand areas including workplace rights, contracts, pay and leave.

"If I find a job, I understand how to find a job and my rights."

A huge thank you also to Oak Farm Library, Hayes Muslim Centre, Botwell Green Library, REAP, Brunel Law Centre and Akash Radio for helping us reach seldom-heard and vulnerable communities – and a special thank you to Sarah and the REAP team for supporting our final event.



Casework Study

Our impacts



Casework spotlight: a historic case

Sarah (not her real name) is a Hillingdon resident who had been on Universal Credit since 2019. What she didn't know was that she had been underpaid for more than six years.

When Sarah moved from Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) onto Universal Credit, her assessment for limited capability for work should have carried over automatically. It never did, and there was nothing she could have done differently.

Joanna, who leads our Macmillan Project, spotted the clue: a deduction on Sarah's very first Universal Credit payment, linked to her old ESA award. Six months of formal challenges, DWP pushback and escalation followed, right up to preparing a Tribunal appeal.

The result: In 2026 due to persistent ongoing casework, Sarah's award was backdated in full, securing £23,000 she was always entitled to. A sum this size is rare, but the story behind it is not.

If you think you may have been underpaid, or you're not sure whether we can help, call our free Advice Line on 0808 278 7893 or email referral@hillingdoncab.org.uk.

Our Macmillan Project also supports people affected by cancer: macmillan@hillingdoncab.org.uk.

[Read the full story on our blog.](#)

Meet Our New volunteer Advisor

Welcome to the Team, Janet Gardner!

We are delighted to welcome Janet Gardner as a volunteer with Citizens Advice Hillingdon, bringing a wealth of experience, local knowledge and a longstanding commitment to supporting our community.

Janet has more than three decades of experience in public service, advocacy and community leadership in Hillingdon. She previously served as a councillor for Hayes Town Ward and, particularly relevant to her work with us, as the Borough's Domestic Violence Victims Advocate and a member of the Hillingdon Domestic Abuse Steering Executive, helping to strengthen local support for survivors of domestic abuse.

Janet is also a Trustee of [**The Gurkha Centre**](#), contributing her community engagement and advocacy experience to its work supporting Gurkha veterans, widows and families.

Since joining us, Janet has already been a valuable addition, supporting our work around domestic abuse, strengthening community relationships, raising awareness of available support and opening new opportunities for outreach.

We are incredibly grateful that Janet has chosen to volunteer with us.

Welcome to the team, Janet – we're delighted to have you with us!



FOLLOW US

Follow us for future community drop-ins and events.

 **Twitter: [@hillingdoncab](https://twitter.com/hillingdoncab)**

 **Facebook: [@citizensadvicehillington](https://www.facebook.com/citizensadvicehillington)**

 **Instagram: [@citizensadvicehillington](https://www.instagram.com/citizensadvicehillington)**

 **LinkedIn: [@citizens-advice-hillingdon](https://www.linkedin.com/company/citizens-advice-hillingdon)**

Get involved

Want to make a difference in Hillingdon? Volunteer, join our team, or donate today — every contribution counts.



Volunteer with us

Citizens Advice Hillingdon relies on a dedicated team of volunteers who play a vital role in supporting our community.

As part of a national network of around 21,600 Citizens Advice volunteers, they help ensure free, confidential and impartial advice reaches those who need it most. However, like many organisations, we have seen a decline in volunteer numbers since the pandemic and urgently need more people to [join us](#).



Current Vacancies

✓ [Adviceline Volunteer](#)

✓ [Research and Campaigns Volunteer](#)

✓ [Language Community Champion Volunteers](#) who speak other languages in addition to English.

✓ [Digital/IT assistant role](#)

Please visit our website for more information: <https://www.hillingdoncab.org.uk/get-involved/>.



Donate today

Funding in Hillingdon has reduced at a time when more people need us. We are still here, but to keep supporting the most vulnerable in our community, we need your help. Support us by transferring to:

Citizens Advice Hillingdon Ltd

Sort code: 608301

Account number: 20084268

Reference: DONATION + Your Name

CONTACT US

OUR SERVICES National Adviceline

To speak to an assessor **CALL FREE** on:

0808 278 7893

Except for Bank Holidays and other National Holidays



Specialist Projects

For direct support please contact the following projects:

Employment Advice Project:
employment@hillingdoncab.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Welfare Benefits Project:
macmillan@hillingdoncab.org.uk
Macmillan project answerphone:
07497 366146

Foodbank Advice Project:
foodbank@hillingdoncab.org.uk

Connected Communities - Hillingdon:
referral@hillingdoncab.org.uk

Our Specialist Projects

Employment Rights Advice Project

We provide **free, confidential employment law advice** and specialist casework to **residents of Hillingdon and surrounding boroughs**, supporting people who are unable to **access legal aid** or afford private legal support.

Macmillan Cancer Welfare Benefits Project

A cancer diagnosis often triggers sudden income loss alongside increased living, treatment and care-related costs. **Delays** or errors in benefit decisions **can cause** significant **financial** and **emotional harm** at an already vulnerable time, particularly where health, disability and caring responsibilities intersect.

Foodbank Advice Project

This service supports residents who are finding it **difficult to provide for themselves or their families**. Often, a combination of financial hardship and other personal circumstances can leave people feeling overwhelmed and unsure where to turn, including needing to **access a foodbank**.

WorkWell Programme

WorkWell project was created to provide tailored support that **helps individuals with disabilities** or **health conditions** overcome barriers and build confidence in their professional journey. By combining employment guidance, health support, and opportunities for volunteering and skill development, WorkWell aims to make the transition into meaningful and sustainable work more accessible for everyone.

Connected Communities Hillingdon

This project **focuses on residents** who may **face barriers to accessing support**, including those experiencing **financial hardship, poor health** or **social isolation**. By delivering advice in community settings, we help prevent problems from escalating and support **more stable, long-term outcomes**.