

# **Report 2020 / 21**

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## **1. Management Committee Centre Staff & Volunteers 2020 / 21**

### **Management Committee**

John Walsh - Chair  
Councillor Billy Hinds - Vice Chair  
Jack Youd - Secretary / Treasurer  
Maggie Smith  
Gerry Phillips  
Edward  
Garner  
Stuart Green

### **Permanent Staff**

Abdul-Karim Al-Malahi (Abdo) -  
Employment Law  
Barbara Benham - Welfare Benefits  
John Howard – Employment  
Law and Debt Advice  
Stefan Cholewka - (Self Employed  
Tutor)

### **Volunteers**

Carol Laidlaw -Housing & Welfar Benefits  
Eddie Garner - Funding & Campaigns  
Angie Gruby - Welfare benefits  
Ian Wallace - Welfare benefits  
Stuart Green - Welfare Benefits

## **Chairs Report**

I wish to say a huge thank you to our staff and volunteers for the outstanding achievements of the last twelve months. The Covid health pandemic has exposed the fragility of the support available for our community. SUCRC is proud to offer support to those in most need whilst campaigning to expose and change the policies that have contributed to the distress in the first place.

### **Welfare Benefits**

The Department of Work and Pensions' own figures reveal that the number of people reliant on welfare benefits doubled during the pandemic to over 5 million. The £20 uplift to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit announced in March 2020 provided critical support to families. A quarter of these claimants receive less than £92 a week. The removal of the £20 uplift cuts their benefit by almost 25%. The decade-long policy of austerity includes a deliberate and calculated policy to reduce claims on social security and benefits by making the system more difficult to understand and navigate. Claims are ruled out on technicalities and appeals drag on with people losing hope that there is any support available from a diminished welfare system. The advice and support provided by SUCRC staff and volunteers provides a lifeline. We have long recognised that we can only ever reach a tiny proportion of those in need, and just as important is the need to continue campaigning to build the pressure for policy change. The importance of the work we do in supporting benefit claimants cannot be understated. Every victory helps keep someone warm and fed. This year our advice services our staff and volunteers have helped clients secure over £----- of wrongly refused benefits. This repatriation of cash is spent locally and has a direct and positive impact on the local economy. Ensuring people can access the payments that they are entitled

### **Employment Advice**

The uncertain economic climate has seen an alarming increase in sharp employment practices i.e. fire and rehire. The best way to protect working conditions is via workplace unions. Unfortunately, not everyone that needs employment advice is a member of a union. We have provided employment advice and representation to 75 clients.

### **Debt**

The centre provided advice and support on debt matters at the earliest possible stage working with clients to agree a strategy to manage their debts enabling clients to fulfil their potential by relieving the stress and anxiety associated with debt. Advice was given on different debt solutions that may be available to the client and an explanation given of the way that various types of debt solutions work. With real wages not increasing rents and other costs rising the need for Debt advice will increase in the coming months and years.

## **M30 Breakfast Club**

The breakfast club is now run by a management committee it supports people with mental health issues and those suffering social isolation who have suffered disproportionately during the Corona Virus lockdowns. During the lockdowns 5101 kg of food were distributed equivalent to 12066 meals

### **Training**

The clients who attend our educational courses do so out of necessity rather than from academic reasons. We have been fortunate to secure funding from the WEA (Workers Education Association) for the Salford Training Hub Programme during the COVID 19 lockdown 2020-21 period and from the DWP for the Salford Training Hub, although the DWP did postpone the funding programme for 12 months due to the pandemic lockdown. During the pandemic lockdown and subsequent restrictive measures we were able to recruit clients from the M30 Breakfast Club / food bank and Job Centre Plus. Extensive door to door leafleting was also undertaken in Eccles with emails and leaflets sent to Housing Associations, Salford Gateways, primary schools and secondary schools in Eccles and across Salford

### **Funding**

The following organisations made significant financial contributions during the financial year for which the trustees are extremely grateful. This financial support facilitates the staff and volunteers to provide support services for the most vulnerable people in Salford by tackling inequality and unfairness. This funding has allowed the work and activities of the centre to both continue and develop further.

Funding organisations included:

Salford City Council, Salford CVS, Access to Justice Fund, Workers Education Association, Awards For All The Good things Foundation, Workers Education Association

Numbers

### **Employment Advice**

15 cases were related to a dismissal.  
10 cases were related to redundancies.  
12 cases were related to discrimination.  
15 cases were breach of contract claims.  
6 cases of un lawful deduction from wages.

(25 Clients were legally represented by the centre)

A total of 75 clients were given legal advice and help

The total amount of money recouped / won was £110,382.71

### **Debt**

60 How to Deal with Debt packs were distributed.  
25 Repayment plans were negotiated with creditors  
(some of these clients will have been seen on quite a number of occasions.)

otal debt managed was over 100.000

### **Welfare benefits**

8 cases were related to Personal Independence Payment.  
11 cases were related Universal Credit.  
4 cases were related to Employment Support Allowance.

53 Cases were taken to the Tribunal 81% successful over all 75 case were concluded.

Money recouped / won for clients £347,431.05

### **M30 Breakfast Club.**

7-10 people a day used the Breakfast Club,(when covid restrictions allowed) ,10 food parcels were distributed per week.( 5101 kg of food were distributed equivalent to 12066 meals)

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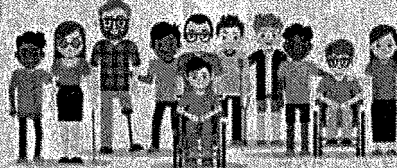
A. Work Capability Assessments (WCA) are directly creating discrimination against disabled people and result in poverty caused by the loss of benefits. Our form completion and medical tribunals service prevents sections of Salford disabled population being driven into poverty and exposed to increased risk of suicide. Statistics show that 1 in every 2 disabled woman who are on or seeking disability benefits are at

Salford Unemployed & Community Resource Centre are a not for profit organisation, established in 1980 who's sole aim to assist the people of Salford. Our friendly, professional team are here to help and support you. In the past 12 months we have helped Salford residents claim over £1,500,000 in benefits.

**How we can help with your Disability Benefit Claim:**

- Completing the claim form
- Accompanying and representing you of medical assessments
- Handling the appeal at Tribunal should the application be refused
- Supporting you throughout the whole process FREE of charge

Call or drop in today to book an appointment: 0161 789 2999



**Salford UCRC**  
Unemployed & Community Resource Centre  
Serving the Community Since 1980

Supported by Salford TUC, Salford Disability Forum, Salford Pensioners & Salford Community Arts Project

64-66 Liverpool Road, Eccles, Salford, M30 0WZ • Telephone: 0161 789 2999  
Opening hours: 9.00am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday

## **Partnerships**

Loaves and Fishes

CVS

Fairshare

Mustard Tree

Salford Manchester Street Support

Department for Work and Pensions

Princes Park Garden Centre/ Disability Forum

Shelter

Guinness Northern Counties

Salix

