

Save our Strategic Grant!

Please consider the impact of cutting such a valuable service to both the economy and the health and wellbeing of older people.

In the last 3 years, over **4,500** people have used our Information & Advice service, securing over **£5.3 million** in previously unclaimed benefits. **The cuts threatening this service will likely result in its closure.**

The total Strategic Grant we have received from Darlington Borough Council is £56,000 over the last three years. This supports a part time member of staff who worked alongside the HEAT advisor (no longer funded by Public Health, cut in March 2016) and supported by individual giving and trusts. This made 1.5 FTE staff who in turn were supported by a team of volunteers. **From September 2016 we have no income for this service.**

This service is tailored to the needs of older people, sessions are non-time constrained, advisors are qualified in Information and advice and dealing with individuals with Dementia. The service has achieved the **AQS** (Advice Quality Standard) which is the benchmark of all advice standards, achieved by very few advice givers. It is audited independently by SGS Ltd and is part of our ISO 9001.2008. The auditors independently verify the figures and case outcomes as part of the audit process. **Loosing this service will mean loosing the standard as well as the experience and training of the advisors.**

Top four reasons for people using our service:

1. Concerns about their health
2. Concerns about not having enough money to pay bills
3. Concerns about putting the heating on
4. Not having enough money to live on.

Survey results (Source Age UK March 2016) based on 131 people.

- 98% of people would recommend our service
- 81% Rate our service Excellent 13% Rate the Service Good
- 92% of Benefit Claims were successful
- Prior to visiting Age UK 58% of people felt stressed and/or their health was deteriorating due to the top 4 reasons.
- 54% of people did not know they were entitled to benefits.
- Top 3 outcomes after receiving our service: People feel less stressed, feel more confident to pay bills, and generally feel happier or more positive.

I&A Statistics for the service: 1 April 15 to 31 March 16

- **Total people directly supported: 1824, an additional 987 indirectly supported (family and carers)**
- **Total value of unclaimed benefits retrieved: £2.3 Million**
81% of clients seen face to face have a disability or illness.

Independent Survey results (Source Age UK National March 2016) based on 131 people:

- 98% of people would recommend our service
- 81% Rate our service Excellent 13% Rate the Service Good
- 92% of Benefit Claims were successful

If Age UK weren't there to help, where would you have gone to get help?*	Local council	6	5%
	Friend or relative	17	13%
	Another organisation	7	5%
	Don't know	98	75%
	No answer provided	3	2%
	Total	131	100%

How did you use the additional income you received?*	Utility bills	50	15%
	Food	40	12%
	Keeping your home adequately warm	59	18%
	Transport	34	10%
	Practical help at home (e.g. cleaner)	66	20%
	Household repairs / adaptations	36	11%
	Clothing	14	4%
	Clearing debt	5	2%
	Going on holiday	1	0%
	Going out socially	9	3%
	No answer provided	13	4%
	Total	327	100%

* Source Age UK Survey March 2016 as part of the Brand Partner Organisational Management Standard accreditation which is Charity Commission endorsed.

The link between deprivation and health inequalities is well-known and pervasive.

A recent report from the Cabinet Office recognises this:

“The provision of timely and high quality advice helps people to resolve problems and take more control of their lives; improves access to justice particularly for vulnerable groups; and helps to meet public demand for independent advice, both on social welfare issues and wider issues such as consumer welfare. It is also recognised that independent advice, at both national and local levels, can help people engage more effectively with the state by helping them to understand their rights and entitlements.”

There is a growing body of evidence of the positive impact that information and advice services have both for individuals and the local community.

‘Not for Profit Advice Services in England, Cabinet Office, October 2012, p4

The Multiplier Effect

Research carried out by Brighton University suggests that every £1 raised through welfare benefits equates to £1.70 spent in the local economy. This ‘multiplier’ effect is created as the money circulates through spending on local goods and services, before it ‘leaks’ out and spending spills over into other communities. Almost all the increased income will be spent locally.

In other words the £5.3 million becomes **£9,010,000, this will be lost to the local economy in Darlington.**

Seeking funding for this service is very difficult, many Trust and Grant Makers view Information & Advice as a statutory responsibility.

Please save our service.



ageukdarlington.org.uk



[enquiries@](mailto:enquiries@ageukdarlington.org.uk)



01325 362832

ageukdarlington.org.uk