



Doncaster
Borough



Doncaster
ageUK

LOCAL SOLUTIONS FUND PROJECT REPORT

2022/23

Well Doncaster

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

We provided local and accessible solutions to existing and emerging problems faced by local communities and the organisations set up to help them.

We offered our communities free, confidential, impartial, early intervention specialist advice and support on the subjects of welfare rights benefits entitlement, benefit applications and appeals.

This was provided through a multi-channel approach clients could contact us via phone, email or face to face at offices and community locations across the borough.

We made sure we utilized the services we already offer to ensure the client's problems were dealt with by specialists in that field and high quality advice and outcomes are achieved.

We have also learned from each other in regards to practice and process and we feel the partnership has positively impacted us operationally through shared ideas and expertise as well as the impact its had on the service users.



IMPROVED PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Systems and community partnerships set up as a result of this project have become embedded in our work. and we work much closer and have a seamless referral platform ,and an improved journey for this seeing help and support. Clients get access to the specialist support they require quicker and this has lead to reduced numbers of clients disengaging with our services.



IMPROVED ACCESS TO ADVICE

This investment allows both organisations to add capacity to they advice teams, this is incredibly important at time when services are seeing the highest demand for services ever experienced. This project afforded us the ability to better respond to this demand at a local and borough wide level.

OUR VALUE TO SOCIETY

We use an established model to calculate the financial value of our advice and the positive outcomes it contributes to individuals and society. It's impossible to put a value on everything we do, so this is likely to be a conservative estimate. For more detail on these savings and a full explanation of our model, please see our financial modelling.

We help bring money, services and opportunities into neighborhoods.

We made over **£2.4 Million** in gains for clients.

We added wider economic and social value to communities improving clients' well being (emotional well being, family relationships and positive functioning).

we made an average income gain of **£631.41** per client seen on the project.

For every £1 invested:

For every £1, £x in fiscal benefits **£6.56**

For every £1, £x in public value **£39.25**

For every £1, £x in value to the people we help (financial outcomes)
£18.77

FINANCIAL OUTCOMES CASE STUDY

If a single client is eligible for Attendance Allowance (high rate) they would receive **£92.40**

They will also receive additional benefits of:

- Pension Credit - **£182.60p/w**
- Severe disability premium **£69.40p/w**
- Council Tax Reduction (band E) **£2,214.23p/a**
- Housing benefit - **£86.30 p/w**
- Free TV Licence - **£159.00 p/a**
- Free prescriptions - **£9.35 per item** (usually have 8- 10 items per month.
- Blue Badge - £1.60 per hour often have multiple appointments and are going for long times - approx **£500 pa** value to client.
- Free Dentistry of which average costs are **£23.80 £65.20 or £282.80.**
- Free Opticians of which average costs are **£30** eye test, glasses **£30-£89**
- On the priority register for energy so supply will not be cut off

This is an average income uprating of **£24,888.03 per year** after using this service.

OUR IMPACT



£2.4 MILLION

In income gains for clients



3,801

Clients advised and supported via this project



25,511

Separate issues dealt with in 2021/22

AVERAGE INCOME GAIN OF £631.41 PER CLIENT SEEN ON THE PROJECT

71%

of people who said they weren't confident about solving their problem before they used this service

Over half of clients said we helped to improve at least one aspect of their lives

60%

of clients said it was easier to get on with their day to day life after coming to us for help.

Increase Adviser Cohort



To help to facilitate the delivery of and the growing demands on our service we aim to increase the numbers of paid and volunteer advisers we have working for us. We would do this through a recruitment drive and through the upskilling of staff working in communities across the borough.

Increase Funding



We aim to use this project as a pilot to bring in new projects and new revenue streams to allow us to respond to increased demands on our services. We continue to work in partnership and look for future joint working funded opportunities

Increase Community knowledge



We increased our offer to clients from within our established community presence, adding value and quality of advice to services already meeting substantial client need in outreach locations. By offering increased access and support on the issue of welfare rights we strengthened peoples awareness and understanding of the processes involved enabled added resilience to communities to better cope with the challenges they face.

THE WIDER IMPACT OF OUR ADVICE

We know giving people advice and helping solve their problems can impact their wider lives in positive ways and make them more resilient and prepared for similar problems in the future.

Both organisations have had a strong commitment to social policy research and campaigns throughout this project, this has allowed us to act as a catalyst for change in public policy and services, enabling local people to have a say about local issues and services which affect their lives, one such example was our campaign to local MP's to uprate benefits in line with inflation, both organisations campaigned on this issues and the campaign was successful.

As a result of our campaigning uprating benefits by inflation is due to happen in April and is a vital first step in helping households weather this storm. Raising housing support in line with rents and additional government interventions will further close this gap.

"I was very worried before I spoke to Citizens Advice and was making myself ill with stress but after talking to them and receiving help I was much more relaxed."



CASE STUDIES

The client is a 64 year old male he lives alone in a property that he owns outright, the client was receiving Contribution based Employment Support Allowance (CBESA,) a Work Capability Assessment was requested by DWP and he was found fit for some work, the client's ESA has been stopped he disagrees with the decision and wants to challenge it. The client has no savings or any other income.

We completed the client's SSCS1 form ensuring supporting information was relevant and supported appeal. Advised client of the process and the likely out come. The client was given a copy of his Appeal form and further evidence was sent to the tribunal judge to consider. Advised they will assess your case without a hearing.

The client won his appeal on 20th July 2022 and was awarded ESA and placed into the support group-LCWRA. He received a back payment of **£3481**

"I didn't know what to do when I got the letter saying I was fit for work without Christina help and advice my health would only have got worse"

£3481

RECEIVED BY CLIENT IN
BACK PAYMENT OF ESA



CASE STUDIES

Mrs Lee contacted Age UK Doncaster following a recommendation from a neighbour. She told us she and her husband both had long-term health conditions and that she was now caring for her husband following diagnosis of a serious illness. In 50 years of marriage they had never had to claim benefits but were struggling now.

Mr and Mrs Lee were assessed by our advisor, Karen, who filled out Attendance Allowance claims for both of them. Following successful claims including back payments, a welfare benefits check was undertaken and the team supported them in claiming for Pension Credit, Council Tax support and Carers Allowance resulting in over £11,000 additional income for the couple.

They feel they couldn't have navigated the benefits system on their own and feel they have a place to turn to if they ever need help in the future. The additional money has changed the way they live, they aren't scared of keeping the heating on all day which they need to keep well, and outings are no longer a trip to Tesco but a meal for two!

"Your support has been life-changing. It feels like someone has waved a magic wand!"

£11,000

ADDITIONAL INCOME FOR
THE COUPLE.



CONCLUSION

Overall the project has been a resounding success on a number of levels operationally we have developed a closer working relationship as partners and would look to work together again on future projects.

From a service user perspective the improved access to high quality welfare rights advice and support has allowed clients to receive benefits they would have otherwise not revived. It has empowered clients financially and improved financial resilience, we have together improved the ability to make informed choices though the delivery of high quality advice and support.

The impact outcomes and the advice and support made significant in particular income gains for client which will feed back into local communities.

This project evidences a real need locally and city wide for free, confidential advice and support in the area of welfare rights. The difficult and complex DWP systems and processes are difficult to navigate and lead to digital financial and social exclusion of the most vulnerable members of our society.

This project highlights the demand there is for these services the importance of being able to make informed decisions but also the empowerment and resilience which can be developed though a well resourced and well designed partnership project.

Together we share a deep concern about the impacts of this project ending and will strive together to find a suitable funder to develop and expand what has been a responsive and impactful project.

Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough

Age UK Doncaster



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to extend a thank you to Well Doncaster who funded and supported this project, from inception to delivery, this impact we have been able to make to clients' lives and communities across the city is down to the confidence and support you have shown in us.

Well Doncaster

A thick, horizontal, green brushstroke graphic that tapers at both ends, positioned below the "Well Doncaster" text.
