

# Benefits & Debt Advice Project

East Sussex Better Together

6 Months Apr - Sep 2017



## Headline Figures

- £3,583,020 annualised benefit income realised for residents
- 4,807 individuals received benefits advice
- 78% of respondents reported improved mental wellbeing
- £2,202,973 total debt managed for 313 individuals
- 8,954 household members benefited from benefits and debt advice

## Helpline - 0333 344 0681

- 3,258 people contacted the helplines
- 4,735 different benefit enquiries dealt with
- PIP, ESA and Universal Credit most common benefit enquiries
- 53% of callers lived in the most deprived wards
- 69% of callers had long term health conditions
- Depression and mobility issues most common long term health conditions

## Casework: Helping people with complex benefit issues

- 1,372 people received face to face casework support
- 77% of casework clients lived in the most deprived wards
- 78% of casework clients had long term health conditions

## Outreach Services: Advice delivered from a health or community setting

- 63 outreach sessions
- 51 outreach sessions delivered from a GP Practice or NHS location
- 202 people received advice at Outreach sessions
- 91 people identified as requiring Casework support
- 75% of people lived in the most deprived wards
- 94% of people had long term health conditions

## Target Groups

- 1,157 older people received advice to support their independence
- 634 people at risk from homelessness received benefits advice
- 3,675 people with a long term health condition received benefits and debt advice
- 901 families with children received benefits and debt advice

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## Expert Debt Service: For people with physical/mental health conditions

- 313 people supported with debt advice
- 6 debts per client
- £2,202,973 of debt managed for all clients
- £627,624 of debt written off
- 82% of people lived in most deprived wards

## Briefings, Presentations and Events

- Briefings to over 60 East Sussex Better Together and Children's Services staff
- 19 briefings delivered to other organisations including Optivo, Orbit, Sussex Housing and Eastbourne Council Children's Forum
- 68 staff, volunteers and residents

## Benefits Awareness & Training

- 10 sessions delivered to health and social care organisations
- 88 staff and patients at Respiratory Physio groups and Pain Clinics
- 36 sessions to other organisations including British Lung Foundation
- 545 staff, volunteers and residents

## ESBT Project Data – Staff & patient engagement and value for money

- 641 direct engagements with ESBT staff and patients including training sessions, health and social care professional referrals/enquiries, and number of people attending outreach sessions delivered from health locations
- Financial gains secured for Expert Service clients between April - September were £1,512,605
- For every £1 invested in our Expert Services we generated £22 in financial gains for each of our clients
- Helpline engagement costs are under £12 per client

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## Development Work

- Presented at East Sussex Financial Inclusion Steering Group
- Produced Universal Credit briefing paper for residents and professionals
- Participated and contributed to Eastbourne Universal Credit network
- Introduced a new dedicated Older Peoples Service

## Case Study 1

Mr A is 58 years old and lives alone in privately rented accommodation in an area of high deprivation. He suffers from cancer, depression, arthritis and mobility issues.

Mr. A's Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) stopped following a work capability assessment. He had asked the Department for Work and Pensions to reconsider his case, but the request was denied. Mr. A attended a Welfare Benefits Project Outreach session seeking assistance to make an appeal. Mr. A was in financial crisis, had been visiting the local foodbank and all these factors were impacting on Mr. A's physical and mental health and wellbeing.

An advisor supported Mr. A to submit an appeal. Mr A was going to make an appointment with his GP to ask for a medical report. The advisor assured Mr A the evidence he already held and the facts of the case meant that this was not necessary.

Mr A's appeal was successful.

Mr A can now meet his daily living costs and no longer has the increased physical and mental health impact of getting to and from the foodbank. Mr A said his stress and anxiety levels had improved and he had begun to think more clearly.

If you would like further information on briefings, training or have any general Welfare Benefit Project enquiries, please contact:

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