



Headline Figures

- £2,664,047 annualised benefit income realised for residents
- 2,334 individuals received benefits advice
- 90% of respondents reported improved mental wellbeing
- £1,262,416 total debt managed for 168 individuals
- 4,699 household members benefited from benefits and debt advice

Helpline - 0333 344 0681

- 1,491 people contacted the helplines
- 2,521 different benefit enquiries dealt with
- PIP, ESA and Universal Credit most common benefit enquiries
- 56% of callers lived in the most deprived wards
- 73% of callers had long term health conditions
- Depression and mobility issues most common long term health conditions

Casework: Helping people with complex benefit issues

- 818 people received face to face casework support
- 68% of casework clients lived in the most deprived wards
- 80% of casework clients had long term health conditions

Outreach Services: Advice delivered from a health or community setting

- 36 outreach sessions
- 25 outreach sessions delivered from a GP Practice or NHS location
- 104 people received advice at Outreach sessions
- 56 people identified as requiring Casework support
- 55% of people lived in the most deprived wards
- 93% of people had long term health conditions

Target Groups

- 717 older people received advice to support their independence
- 338 people at risk from homelessness received benefits advice
- 1,857 people with a long term health condition received benefits and debt advice
- 459 families with children received benefits and debt advice

Benefits & Debt Advice Project

East Sussex Better Together

Q3 Oct - Dec 2017



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

- 168 people supported with debt advice
- 7 debts per client on average
- £1,262,416 of debt managed for all clients
- £309,213 of debt written off
- 84% of people lived in most deprived wards

Briefings, Presentations and Events

- 4 briefings to 32 East Sussex Better Together Frailty teams and health and key workers
- 5 briefings delivered to other organisations including multiple self-help groups at networking events
- Over 120 staff, volunteers and residents

Benefits Awareness & Training

- 1 session delivered to NHS Respiratory Physio group with 12 patients and staff
- 22 session to other organisations including ASC older people's services, council housing staff, foster carers and at carers events
- Over 500 staff, volunteers, carers and residents

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

- 258 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 October - December were £1,075,198
- For every £1 invested in our Expert Services we generated £25 in financial gains for our clients
- Helpline engagement costs are £12 per client

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Development Work

- Hosted B&DAP reports on website
- Participated in University of Brighton Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact workshop
- Reviewed current IMD Ward data ensuring valid and appropriate monitoring and reporting
- Benefits & Debt Advice Project (B&DAP) screen saver sent to ESCC Libraries
- New B&DAP leaflet produced and printed and delivered to health, social care, statutory and voluntary organisations and services
- Updated the business case for additional Expert Benefits Caseworkers

Case Study 1

George is 61 and has severe long term mental and physical health conditions. He suffers from anxiety and has OCD, learning difficulties, bilateral Dupuytren's contracture, cervical disc degeneration and spondylosis, depression, Zenker's diverticulum and osteoarthritis.

George had recently been found fit for work by the DWP and had lost his Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) benefits. Our adviser challenged the ESA decision and supported George to make a claim for Universal Credit (UC). George needed medical certificates for his UC claim and the adviser wrote down exactly what was required in a note that George was able to hand to his GP.

George had significant rent and council tax arrears. The situation was impacting on his health and wellbeing, causing him increased stress and anxiety. During this period George confided to the adviser that he was struggling to cope and was having suicidal thoughts, she contacted his GP who referred George to Health in Mind.

We also referred George to the B&DAP debt service and they provided him with financial capability training and with advice and support on managing the debts. We also contacted Hastings Borough Council with a successful request for Discretionary Housing Payment to help with his rent arrears as his landlord was threatening eviction. We ensured George was also supported by Homeworks.

George was being transferred onto the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) benefit. We assisted George with the application form and attendance at the medical assessment. George struggled with the questions and the process, it was very apparent that he would not have been able to manage the assessment process on his own. George was not awarded PIP and the Assessors Report contrasted with what had happened at the assessment meeting. We requested a mandatory reconsideration, following which the DWP called the adviser to discuss the case, and the decision was revised to award George the enhanced rate of PIP.

George lives in a top floor flat and struggles to cope with the stairs. We have supported him to apply for sheltered accommodation. The support provided has resulted in significant personal, health and financial benefits for George. He has confirmed he is feeling a lot more positive and is no longer having suicidal thoughts. His anxiety and stress have reduced and his increased benefits enable him to better manage and maintain his independence. His debts have been cleared, he has received financial capability training and he is in receipt of his full and correct benefit entitlement.

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

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