

# Benefits & Debt Advice Project

Hastings and Rother CCG

Q3 Oct - Dec 2017



## Headline Figures

- £1,719,230 annualised benefit income realised for residents
- 1,364 individuals received benefits advice
- 94% of respondents reported improved mental wellbeing
- £699,078 total debt managed for 111 individuals
- 2,736 household members benefited from benefits and debt advice

## Helpline - 0333 344 0681

- 998 people contacted the helplines
- 1,594 different benefit enquiries dealt with
- PIP, ESA and Universal Credit most common benefit enquiries
- 60% of callers lived in the most deprived wards
- 77% of callers had long term health conditions
- Depression and mobility issues most common long term health conditions

## Casework: Helping people with complex benefit issues

- 546 people received face to face casework support
- 72% of casework clients lived in the most deprived wards
- 92% of casework clients had long term health conditions

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

- 19 outreach sessions
- 19 outreach sessions delivered from a GP Practice or NHS location
- 69 people received advice at Outreach sessions
- 41 people identified as requiring Casework support
- 44% of people lived in the most deprived wards
- 93% of people had long term health conditions

## Target Groups

- 196 older people received advice to support their independence
- 205 people at risk from homelessness received benefits advice
- 1,162 people with long term health conditions received benefits and debt advice
- 300 families with children received benefits and debt advice



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

- 111 people supported with debt advice
- 8 debts per client
- £699,078 of debt managed for all clients
- £230,958 of debt written off
- 99% of people lived in most deprived wards

## Briefings, Presentations and Events

- Briefing to East Sussex Better Together Frailty teams
- 3 briefings and events with other organisations including multiple self help groups
- In total briefings delivered to over 100 staff, volunteers and residents

## Benefits Awareness & Training

- 11 sessions delivered to organisations including ASC older people's services, supported housing services and at learning disability and carers events
- 130 staff, volunteers 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 attendance 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

- Participated in University of Brighton Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact workshop
- Reviewed IMD Ward data to ensure 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
- Update 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 contact:

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