

North Area Council

Outreach Project

Project Delivery from September 2015 to
31st December 2021

Project Overview (1)

- The service is jointly delivered by Citizens Advice Barnsley and DIAL
- The service delivers Generalist and Specialist Benefit outreach advice to residents and workers in Darton East, Darton West, St Helens and Old Town Wards via outreach services
- Prior to 23rd March 2020 this project was delivered at various outreaches throughout the North Area. Since that date all client contact has been either via the telephone or digital. It is proposed to restart outreaches on Monday 28th March 2022

Total Project: Summary of Results

Since this project was initially funded in September 2015 we have made:

- **10,481** client contacts
- In excess of **£11.82m** of additional welfare benefits gain
- In excess of **£1.74m** of debt managed
- A return on investment of **£20** per **£** spent

Client Numbers

Clients assisted with 23,900 Issues

An average of 32 clients assisted each week

Pre Pandemic, home visits undertaken to assist clients in their own homes

Clients assisted with various forms, from benefit applications, Blue Badge applications to replies to court forms

Project Benefits Outcomes

1800 clients assisted to claim benefits
an average of over £6,500 per client

One client assisted to claim £24,400 of benefit
another £22,100 another £15,000

Project Debt Outcomes

300 clients assisted with debts,
an average of over £5,900 per client.

Two clients assisted with debts over £34,000, a number in the £ teens, but also some clients with debts only of a few hundred £, but it's the impact of those debts on clients lives.

Top 5 Project Enquiry Issues

The top five enquiry areas as dealt with by CAB over the total project are:

- Benefits & Tax Credits
- Benefits Universal Credit
- Debt
- Employment
- Relationships & Family

On this project, DIAL supports clients with welfare issues so all their enquiries relate to welfare benefits

Research & Campaigns work

Using North Area client evidence, we have escalated 21 social policy issues with our national policy team in support of national campaign work. The highest number related to: Employment, Discrimination and Housing

Currently Profile Data shows

- **56%** are female, **44%** male
- **76%** of clients report a long term health condition or disability
- **7%** of clients that use the service are retired
- **8%** of clients are employed
- **3%** are unemployed
- **82%** on Benefits

Case Study 1 CAB

Overview: Client resides in mortgaged property with their partner. Previously client was a director and shareholder of a company, which went into liquidation.

Help given: Creditor obtained CCJ and applied to court for a Charging Order and an order for the sale of the property. Advised on orders courts could make and how to defend against the Charging Order.

Outcome: Client able to deal with this matter so that they and partner could remain residing in the property but also deal with the debt in an affordable manner.

Case Study 2 CAB

Overview: Client dismissed by employer while on sick leave covered by fit notes provided by GP. Client worked for employer for several years. Client was dismissed by email following failure to act on emails, sent to client regarding meetings and sickness, which were sent to their works email account, which client due to illness, was unable to access.

Help given: Advised client may be able to claim unfair dismissal due to actions taken by employer. Also advised on entitlement to holiday pay, disability discrimination, challenging dismissal, appeals process and employment Tribunal.

Outcome: Client felt more able, with support from Citizens Advice and partner, to deal with the employment and dismissal and seek further assistance from qualified advisers and ACAS to pursue unfair dismissal.

Case Study 1 DIAL

Overview: Couple on low income, with two disabled children and one of the parents also disabled, struggling with the disability benefits system.

Help given: Carried a full benefit check, assisted clients to claim, 2 X DLA for children, PIP for one parent and other enhanced related benefits

Outcome: Client had benefits income increased by £543 per week and were able to obtain a car via mobility which was vital during the current pandemic.

Case Study 2 DIAL

Overview: Client has been in receipt of PIP for a number of years, however; lost it all on review. Leaving client in financial difficulties during the current pandemic.

Help given: Assisted client to access all their data and make an appeal to the Tribunal.

Outcome: Client successfully won the appeal and had the benefits reinstated. This amounted to £218 per week. Client now has reduced stress and felt, prior to DIAL's contact, that they had not been believed and called a liar by the DWP.

Client Comments

- I struggled alone with the same problem for years, not realising that Citizens Advice Barnsley could have helped me. If I had made contact with them sooner it would have saved me many sleepless nights. If everyone knew more widely about the help available, it could help with all kinds of stress and mental health issues.
- Excellent service so close to home has been a massive help.
- Very helpful, made to feel at ease, given plenty of useful phone number to move forward. Thank you
- I was told about Citizen Advice from a friend. It was the first time I have seen them and it made me feel better about myself and the help I got from Zoe was first class.
- This service has been my family's life line and with it being local to me has helped my mental health in getting my financial difficulties sorted.

Client Comments

- “What a difference this is going to make to all our lives. I cannot believe how knowledgeable the advisor was, not only about all the different benefits but about my child’s condition. He really understood it !”
- “I would never have been able to appeal like DIAL did. You must know so much to be able to understand the law and where it was not applied properly”.
- “I have used DIAL on a number of occasions and always had the very best advice and guidance on every occasion, I would have no hesitation in using them again or recommending them to friends and family”
- “I can’t thank DIAL enough. The difference this makes is enormous”.
- “DIAL has helped me to get a positive result from my appeal, something I could not do for myself. They have provided a professional, first class, friendly service “

ANY QUESTIONS

Thank you