

Lincolnshire NHS/CAB Income Maximisation Project 2011-2012

Advice on Prescription

- Benefits
- Tax Credits
- Money issues



Patient's name.....

I am referring you for free, confidential advice and practical help.

Please phone the CAB Caseworker on.....

She will arrange to see you at home or at the CAB

Signed.....Date.....

.....Surgery



Citizens Advice Bureau
Anytown
Lincolnshire



Project Outcomes

During 2011-12, an annualised total of £5,002,652.20 was secured in benefits for 2651 clients as a result of help from project caseworkers.

The following table details the disability benefits secured by the project caseworkers. There are other benefit gains, such as in pension credit and housing benefit, which are not reported upon for this project.

Benefit	Number	Annualised £
Attendance Allowance high rate & lower rate	474	1,568,954.40
Disability Living Allowance Care & Mobility high and low rate	955	2,026,154.00
All Carers & Disability Premiums & Carers Allowance	243	565,143.80
Incapacity Benefit/ESA	240	842,400.00
Totals	1912	5,002,652.20

£13.51 was secured for every £1 invested in the project by NHS Lincolnshire

- There are many clients who also received backdated benefit awards as mentioned in the case studies on the following pages. Some bureaux have calculated these as well over £50k per year which does not show on the figures above and is even more money to be spent on services within the community of Lincolnshire.
- Our clients are in a position to purchase a wider range of products and services and are often able to stay in their own homes and community for much longer. The significant amount of money raised in additional benefits, which would largely have gone unclaimed is a boost for the local economy.
- The impact of additional benefit income on older people means more independence, choice and control of their own lives.
- The money secured for clients helps those services under budgetary constraints to maintain longer-term care promoting independence for clients in their own homes.

Case Studies

1. Client aged 81 living with disabled wife aged 81. They had both been in receipt of high rate Attendance Allowance (AA) and associated means tested benefits. Client had let his AA claim lapse on renewal as he did not think he was entitled to it. He contacted the Bureau five months after his award had lapsed as his income had been reduced and he did not understand why.

Caseworker did a home visit and helped to complete a new Attendance Allowance claim. A letter was written to DWP explaining why the client had let his award lapse and requested that they backdate the claim to the date of the renewal. DWP agreed and clients received £4924 in backdated benefits.

2. Client has severe mental health problems and was in receipt of contribution based Employment Support Allowance (ESA). The new welfare reforms would mean that her entitlement to ESA would stop once she had received contribution based ESA for over a year.

Client was assisted with her ESA renewal form and after assessment she was assessed as sufficiently sick to continue to receive ESA beyond the one-year limit.

The client is now in the support group she will not have to attend work focused interviews. She no longer has the worry over benefits being stopped and this has had a positive effect on her health.

3. Client with mental health problems including psychosis. Lives in rural part of county. Attended Bureau for help to claim Disability Living Allowance (DLA). Claim was not successful. Helped client to appeal decision, obtained supporting evidence from her mental health support worker, wrote submission, won appeal and awarded high rate care and low rate mobility. The Disability Benefits Centre (DBC) wrote to the Tribunal Service (TS) for written statement of reasons as not happy with the high level of the award. They requested this 5 times from the TS. Finally the TS admitted they had shredded the paperwork. Meanwhile client still had no income from DLA. In March 2012 after further negotiation between CAB and DBC, the DBC agreed to accept the tribunal decision and accepted it was not fair on the client that she was still not receiving DLA. Client finally received a back-payment of approx. £10,000 in April this year. Due to her mental health problems she would not have managed to do this without help. A Social Policy Bureau Evidence Form was completed for this.

4. Client needed help in renewing his Disability Living Allowance (DLA), which was awarded for a period of one year only. Client was in receipt of highest rate care component and highest rate mobility component of DLA. He wanted to join a motability scheme but was not able to do this without being awarded higher rate of mobility component of DLA for a period of at least 12 months. Therefore he wanted to renew his DLA without further delay. Client had already been in receipt of highest rates of both components and a suggestion was made to wait until a later stage before sending in the renewed application. However, the client did not want to wait and the claim form was sent together with the supporting evidence.

Subsequently, the DLA was renewed and client remained entitled to higher rate of mobility component and highest rate of care component.

Client was very happy with the decision, as it allowed client to join a motability scheme and also receive a road tax exemption certificate. Client would not have been able to complete the renewal form if it was not for the help and assistance he has received under this project.

5. A married couple approached the Bureau to ascertain whether they were receiving their correct benefit entitlement. As client had difficulty dressing, getting to bathroom, general mobility and could not cook for himself, we suggested he might be eligible to claim Attendance Allowance. Client was helped to complete the Attendance Allowance application form and was awarded Attendance Allowance at the higher rate. This also increased their entitlement to means tested benefits.

The effect of these successful claims for AA and other benefits mentioned resulted in an increase of £101.52 per week.

6. A 60 year old man with severe disabilities put in an application for Disability Living Allowance without help. The claim was refused. He had also applied for Employment & Support allowance (ESA) which was also rejected. He came to caseworker for help with his Appeal. His case was assessed to be eligible for high rate mobility and high rate care (the highest award possible). His Appeal was prepared with a submission of his case together with a letter to his GP seeking support.

Both Appeals took an exceptionally long time to be heard but were eventually won. As a result of his DLA Appeal the client became entitled to the sum of £125 per week (£6500 per annum). He additionally received backdated payment of this award totalling over £9500. The total annualised and backdated payments for DLA were circa £16k. The ESA Appeal entitlement was also backdated which meant that the client was entitled to the weekly sum of £94.25 per week (£4901.00 per annum) with a backdated payment of over £2450. The total annualised and backdated ESA gain was therefore in the region of £7300. The total gain from the both appeals was £23k. .

The client's wife was entitled to claim Carers Allowance which was submitted with a request to backdate in line with the benefit. This was accepted and she was awarded the sum of £55.55 per week (£2888.60 per annum) with a backdated award of over £4400. In conclusion, as a result of the help and support provided through funding by the project, this couple gained over £30k.

Social Policy reports were lodged in relation to the delays at the Tribunals Service.

The following are a small snapshot of client comments received this year....

“

The service was excellent, and having Attendance Allowance will allow me to remain in care self-funded for longer, much improving my outlook on life.”

“

I couldn't have managed to fill in all the forms without the help of my caseworker – it took all the pressure off.”

“

I felt unable to cope mentally with another round of medicals and tribunals and found your help and support invaluable.”

“

Your adviser was extremely helpful to me, explaining benefits I could apply for which I did not know existed.”

“

We felt our adviser was very helpful and understanding and completed my application very competently. If it wasn't for her help we may not be in receipt of Attendance Allowance.”

“

I was very worried about how I would manage if I lost my DLA, but with the help of the caseworker ensuring everything was in order before my new application was sent meant that the result was positive. A very big thank you.”

“

I was pleased to have won my ESA appeal. The support and advice received made the appeal process less stressful and am sure helped in winning the appeal.”

Client Feedback

We send out client feedback surveys to all clients on completion of their case. The following results show how the service is viewed from the client's point of view. This year we shall be trialing telephone feedback as well in order to improve the response rate.

Health & Wellbeing	Has your health and sense of well-being improved? 68% said yes
Financial	Are you better off financially? 91% said yes
Support Services	Are you more aware of support services? 90% said yes
Purchase Services	Are you able to purchase services to support you? 75% said yes
Getting Out	Are you able to get out more? 63% said yes
Independence	Do you feel our service will help you to continue to live independently? 93% said yes



A countywide service

This well-established project covers the whole of Lincolnshire through seven Citizens Advice Bureaux in Boston, East Lindsey, Lincoln, Sleaford, South Holland, South Kesteven and West Lindsey. Welfare Benefits specialist caseworkers are situated in each bureau to ensure a network of local contacts. Referrals from many agencies throughout Lincolnshire have been maintained and new contacts added to those already established. We work in partnership with GPs, nurses and those associated with caring for people in their homes. Organisations such as Social Services, Age Concern, Homestart and Housing Associations as well many Community Mental Health Teams find our service invaluable in helping their clients to increase their income through comprehensive benefits advice, and help with successful benefit applications and appeals.

The provision of advice for our clients on a one-to-one basis is very important to them and promotes overall well-being. The benefits application forms can be difficult for clients to complete on their own and our caseworkers are able to give them an individual service which enables them to claim all benefits available to them. This often means they are eligible for other benefits or services which they would not have realised they are entitled to.

Home visits are an important part of the project to enable those who have limited mobility, and are not able to visit a bureau, can receive the help they need in their own homes, if necessary with their family or carers present. This ensures that everyone is able to access our advice and help.

Location of bureaux throughout Lincolnshire:

Boston CAB

The Len Medlock Voluntary Centre
St George's Road
Boston
Lincs
PE21 8YB

South Holland CAB

Council Offices
Priory Road
Spalding
Lincs
PE11 2XE

East Lindsey CAB (Head Office)

Unit 2, Meridian House
41 Eastgate
Louth
Lincs
LN11 9NH

South Kesteven CAB

Stamford Office:
39 High Street
Stamford
Lincs
PE9 2BB

Lincoln CAB

Beaumont Lodge
Beaumont Fee
Lincoln
LN1 1UL

Grantham Office:
Guildhall Arts Centre
St Peters Hill
Grantham
Lincs
NG31 6PZ

Sleaford CAB

Money's Yard
Carre Street
Sleaford
Sleaford
Lincs
NG34 7TW

West Lindsey CAB

26 North Street
Gainsborough
Lincs
DN21 2HU

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help at the heart of your community

debt

benefits and social security

discrimination

housing

employment

family and personal matters

law

consumer rights

free.independent.confidential

www.adviceguide.org.uk