

Grants to Voluntary Sector Six monthly Update Report to Finance & Staffing Portfolio Holder Meeting, 22 August 2017

Open Grant programmes Q3 & Q4, 2016-17

Case Studies

CAB

1 Debt and Benefits, Great Shelford

R lives in private rented accommodation and has mental health issues. He came to Citizens Advice for help to manage debts of over £30,000. Although he had previously received help to manage his debts, and had conscientiously abided by the repayment plan agreed, a recent drop in benefits as a result of moving from DLA to PIP and the linked loss of Working Tax Credit Disability Allowance meant that he was unable to afford his rent each month.

R had applied for social housing in order to reduce his outgoings, but being single was not in priority need. He had also taken on additional work, but this resulted in him working 7 days a week; he was concerned that this would not be sustainable in the long term due to his history of mental illness.

Our advisers helped R to successfully apply to local charities for grants to clear his rent arrears. This reduced the immediate financial pressure on him and removed the risk of homelessness. Our disability benefits specialist is currently helping Rob to appeal the disability benefit decision, which DWP made before receiving additional medical information from his GP. Our debt team continue to assist Rob to manage his debts. He feels positive about being able to manage his situation with their support.

2 Disability Benefits, Duxford

S was referred to us after attending a reassessment for PIP, following which she received a letter informing her that she was to lose the enhanced rate of mobility, despite previously having been awarded DLA at the high rate of care and mobility for an indefinite period. This meant that she would lose her mobility vehicle within 6 weeks and therefore would be housebound as she was unable to walk unaided. She also needed considerable help with daily living. She asked her GP to provide medical evidence in support of the reconsideration, however when she received the letter it had been written by a different doctor who had given out of date information. The delay in submitting the evidence resulted in the DWP turning down the reconsideration; our specialist argued that the decision should be looked at again before going to appeal.

S's car has been collected, so she is without transport and has no independence while she waits for a decision on her benefits. She is totally housebound and dependent on family members. Our Disability benefits team continue to fight to get this decision turned round.

3 Disability Benefits, Girton

The client first approached the Citizens Advice for advice about applying for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and a Blue Badge. The client had been diagnosed with a chronic condition and had been on long term sick leave for the previous two months.

The client was provided with information on her entitlements. She was further advised that her condition is one automatically recognised as a disability and it was explained that her

employers must make any reasonable adaptations which allow her to continue to work in her current role, or consider a suitable alternative role. It was also explained that if she feels she is no longer able to continue working she can apply for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

After successfully applying for both PIP and a Blue Badge the client returned for further advice on negotiating a return to work with her employer and the end of her entitlement to statutory sick pay. The client was advised on her employment rights under the Equality Act 2010 and it was explained to her the paperwork she should expect to receive when statutory sick pay ends and that she could then make an application for ESA.

4 Housing and Benefits, SCDC

H is a single parent, with 1 child. She had a large level of rent arrears £2500, due to missed and in frequent payments. She already had a suspended possession order that was granted in 2011. Her Housing Association had applied to the courts for an eviction notice to be issued due to a breach in the possession order. This had been granted and she was awaiting an eviction date.

H attended an outreach as she was struggling with bills and had letters from the court that she did not understand. She is working two part time jobs and does not get any benefits.

We met with H, helped her to get an accurate income and expenditure sheet produced, so both the CAB and the client could see the financial picture. A financial capability advisor then reviewed this and talked through a number of options as to how we could help H address the deficit and explained the importance of priority debts over non priority debts, that rent and council tax should always be a paid as a priority.

Actions identified:

- Benefit check – helped client to apply for tax credits (potential £140 a week in tax credits)
- Helped client to apply for HB and CTR, assisted with forms (successful award of £120 per week AND £19.23 per week)
- Application made to Assure water tariff (Potential savings of up to 80% on water monthly costs)
- Applied to DHP for help with arrears (not awarded)
- Applied to court for stay of execution – for more time to address issues.
- Negotiations made with Council Tax to stop the liability order and client to pay £15 per month off arrears.
- Application made to SCDC Housing Department 'Spend to save' scheme as DHP not awarded. (awarded loan given to client for £2500 to cover her arrears, affordable repayment of £5 per week)
- Housing association ceased eviction action as client had paid off arrears. Ensured the balance was £0 so no further action can be brought as part of the suspended possession order. Client is able to stay in home

We are working with the client on an on going basis to help with her new budget changes.

5 Disability Benefits - Meldreth

A is divorced and lives in local authority accommodation. Until recently, A had worked for a local company for over 20 years. He was diagnosed with a debilitating illness some years

ago that has recently worsened to such an extent that his mobility has deteriorated and he experiences extreme widespread pain. He had been on long term sick leave and his Statutory Sick Pay was about to end. He was extremely anxious about his future and how he was going to pay the bills and support himself.

When A came to Citizens Advice for help, we explained that he would receive form SSP1 from his employer within 7 days of his SSP ending and could apply for ESA using the form. We established that he was eligible for housing benefit and council tax reduction and helped him apply. Andy returned with the ESA50 form (work capability assessment form) and we assisted him with its completion. We also advised A to apply for Personal Independence Payment and helped him complete the form and gather medical evidence to support his application. He has since been awarded full housing benefit and council tax reduction; ESA in WRAG and standard rate care and mobility PIP.

A's confidence has increased and his anxiety has greatly reduced since he first came to see us. He stated that he is a man who likes routine and he feels much more secure with regular income and knowing that he has enough money to pay the bills.

Financial outcomes – annual rates:

•	ESA Work Related Activity Group	£3,802
•	PIP	£4,038
•	Housing Benefit	£5,044
•	Council Tax Reduction	£1,004

6 Disability Benefits - Steeple Morden

E came to Citizens Advice in desperation after being told to come to us by a friend. E is a very articulate lady who was diagnosed with a chronic debilitating condition several years ago. Over the last couple of years her condition has got progressively worse such that daily living activities are a real struggle. She lives with her very elderly mother who is also her full time carer. E told us that it was far from ideal as she felt that she had lost all of her independence. She informed us that she had applied for PIP last year but was awarded zero points; she applied for a mandatory reconsideration which upheld the decision. At the time, she had no energy or inclination to appeal against the decision and did not think to come to Citizens Advice for help.

We helped E complete a new PIP application form and submit this to the DWP with all relevant medical evidence. We were subsequently informed by E that she had been awarded both enhanced rate care and enhanced rate mobility.

E was delighted with this outcome and has since informed us that it has made a really significant difference to the quality of her life. Although she still has the condition, she finds it mentally much easier to cope as she has the extra money to afford herself some independence.

Financial outcome – annual rates:

- PIP £8,341

Care Network

OAKINGTON and WESTWICK NEIGHBOURS (OWN) – A Good Neighbour Scheme CASE STUDY UPDATE MARCH 2017

This community group have been supported through a period of two years by Care Network. The scheme launched in early autumn 2016 and with our help remains sustainable providing a strong community resilience and early intervention and preventative outcomes to support good health and wellbeing.

Care Network supported the initial group of interested village members in exploring ideas for a village help scheme. We then worked with them planning to take the idea

forward and how they might engage and communicate to encourage wider village member's involvement. We helped them prepare a village community day where the idea for the scheme would be introduced.

Care Network advised on setting up a constituted body so that insurance could be sorted. Volunteers were identified. We advised on accessing funding and the

for

Do you want to volunteer?

Whether you can do just one hour a month or more, all offers of help are welcome.

If you would like to be part of this network, please leave a message on

07902 111786

or e-mail

neighbours@oakingtonandwestwick.com

Community Life Action Group



In addition to Oakington and Westwick Neighbours, the Community Life Action Group is promoting general sharing of resources, skills and interests amongst people in the village through

www.streetbank.com

If you register and adjust the radius to our village you can connect with other local residents to share items such as ladders or drills or find a welcome home for stuff you no longer need. You can also connect with people for hobbies such as bird watching, games, beer brewing or car maintenance. Anything is possible!



Oakington and Westwick Neighbours



www.oakingtonandwestwick.com

group applied for and received funding from Cambridgeshire Community Foundation. Care Network then helped to promote the group and supported with appropriate

policies, DBS checks and helped find insurance for the group. We assisted the group in putting together a training pack for volunteers and they planned and ran a volunteer training event.

We were then involved in sourcing Dementia Friends training for their next Volunteer event and we attended providing a short input on Care Network Older People services.

We invited OWN members to attend the Older Peoples services Patch meeting so that they could meet and talk with other good neighbour scheme invited to share their experience and best practice and this also gave them

an opportunity to network with other older people services providers. The scheme is now sustainable and self-managing with the background support of Care Network. They coordinate the activity of carrying out the DBS checks for volunteers and promoting regularly in the parish as needed.

Do You Ever Need A Hand?

Are You Sometimes ...

... stuck for help with a small task and wonder if there's someone in the village who might give you a hand? Or do you wonder if there's someone locally who could give you a lift to an appointment or might enjoy getting together occasionally just for a chat or for playing a game?

Oakington and Westwick Neighbours is all about connecting people in the village.

We are a network of volunteers who are offering our skills and time to help with a variety of needs.

A lot of caring and sharing already takes place informally, especially amongst those who have lived here for a long time.


We want to make sure everybody can draw on some help if needed.

Whether young or old, fit or frail, people can ask for help with one task and/or offer help with another.


Examples

These are some of the things we can do:

- fetching a prescription,
- cooking a meal
- clearing a storage space
- helping out with the computer
- providing a lift to an appointment, or visit a friend
- relieving a carer
- keeping company
- doing basic DIY
- walking the dog/help with pets



How to Contact Us



If you would like help for yourself or someone you know, perhaps just to help through a crisis, you can contact us by phoning **07902 111786** or emailing neighbours@oakingtonandwestwick.com

Our co-ordinator will arrange to visit to discuss how we may help, and then try and match you with the right person. We can arrange help with transport through Cottingham Carecar, a social transport service.

We can provide help for a short period or longer term. In order to protect people in vulnerable situations, the network has an assigned co-ordinator and volunteers receive ongoing basic training.