

# Fylde Borough Council Annual Report

Period covered: 1st April 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

Compiled by: Zoe Johnston, Information & Advice Service Manager

**Age UK Lancashire**  
Wellbeing Centre, Moorgate,  
Ormskirk, L39 4RY

t 0300 303 1234  
e [admin@ageuklancs.org.uk](mailto:admin@ageuklancs.org.uk)  
[www.ageuklancs.org.uk](http://www.ageuklancs.org.uk)



## General Update

Age UK Lancashire continues to deliver a high quality, confidential Information & Advice service across Lancashire for people aged 65+ and their carers. The support from Fylde Borough Council contributes towards our Information and Advice team via our St Annes office, and face-to-face community delivery in the area. The office on St Georges Road reopened to the public in July 2021, in line with government guidelines.

In recent months we have seen the easing of government restrictions relating to Covid 19 precautions. However, taking into account our client demographic, we have been cautious in returning to previous ways of working. We have evaluated what worked well and what worked as a 'temporary fix' during the pandemic and lockdowns. Two teams contribute towards the Information and Advice (I&A) delivery; our 0300 Call Handling Team and our community focussed I&A Team. The I&A Team consists of both staff and volunteers, who deliver home visits, surgeries and support with applications for blue badges and welfare benefits.

The first point of contact into the service is often our 0300 number where our call handlers can help immediately with a simple enquiry or triage clients appropriately. This alongside our internal services acting as referral agents, 209 people were referred for more detailed advice support. Our I&A Team would usually endeavour to recruit and train community volunteers, and thus increase their presence through outreach and engagement. However, the restrictions due to Covid-19 have meant volunteer recruitment has been on hold. Outreach events have not yet returned to normal, though they are increasing, and we have attended many of these across the county. Some events adapted during the pandemic to being delivered on-line, and we continue to attend these as well as face to face events.

Since April 2021, 36 Fylde residents received full welfare benefit checks, and we supported 60 clients with completing claim forms. We also supported 36 clients with community care enquiries, and a further 65 with enquiries relating to debt/other money, housing and consumer issues. We have seen an average of 8-10 clients attending the two drop-in sessions each week at the office which reopened at the end of July.

One of our full-time advisers delivers one to one advice sessions in client homes, relating to scams awareness and advice. This is as part of a 2-year project and started on 13<sup>th</sup> March. So far approximately 24 sessions have been delivered across the county, as well as group awareness talks for community groups.

Whilst government guidance and easing of restrictions has meant we are able to resume face to face appointments, we are continuing to use telephone appointments wherever we can. This means we reduce time spent travelling and can therefore support more people. The method used to deliver our service is agreed with our clients taking their needs into account.

**Age UK Lancashire**  
Wellbeing Centre, Moorgate,  
Ormskirk, L39 4RY

t 0300 303 1234  
e [admin@ageuklancs.org.uk](mailto:admin@ageuklancs.org.uk)  
www.ageuklancs.org.uk



Regardless of the method of service delivery, all clients can expect that their enquiry is fully explored, and they will receive comprehensive advice followed up with a confirmation of advice letter with details of the information and advice we have given and any steps they should take to achieve the desired outcome.

Since April in Fylde Borough we delivered the following services:

- Information & Advice including case work
- Hospital Aftercare – practical support for people discharged from hospital
- Befriending scheme – offering social visits and contact with volunteers
- Home Help service – providing cleaning, shopping and other errands
- Removing Barriers – supporting veterans
- Age of Opportunity – supporting people aged 50+ back into employment
- Support at Home – shopping, prescription collections, errands and domestic support
- Good Day Calls – regular chats and ‘check-ins’ for clients who are lonely and/or isolated (set up in response to Covid-19)
- Art of Isolation and Veterans Art of Isolation projects – encouraging individuals to submit examples of creativity during the pandemic
- Scams Awareness – helping clients identify possible scams and advising on how they can feel more confident dealing with possible scammers. As part of this project, we are working closely with Trading Standards, the police, and Action Fraud. We are able to offer clients free call-blockers through this project, which reduces the risk from telephone scams.
- Warm Homes Project – aimed at identifying clients who may be eligible for warm home discounts as part of energy company ‘broader groups’. Also offering information and advice on keeping warm and well in colder weather, and smart meters.
- We have recently supported Fylde Borough Council in distributing the government’s Household Support Fund to clients who are considered vulnerable and may be in or at risk of fuel poverty, particularly as energy bills have increased dramatically.

### Information & Advice

Age UK Lancashire provides a comprehensive Information & Advice service to clients over the age of 65 years and their carers throughout the Fylde area. This is a free, one-to-one service supporting, informing

**Age UK Lancashire**  
Wellbeing Centre, Moorgate,  
Ormskirk, L39 4RY

t 0300 303 1234  
e [admin@ageuklancs.org.uk](mailto:admin@ageuklancs.org.uk)  
www.ageuklancs.org.uk



and advising older people and their carers often at the most vulnerable times in their life. Our services include: signposting and referral to other agencies, providing information and advice, form filling and casework.

As part of our holistic service we extend our service to the immediate family and carers of our clients where appropriate.

We support all enquiries that are within our area of expertise and will actively refer to other specialist advice services where appropriate such as Citizen's Advice for debt advice and Welfare Rights for benefit appeals.

Our Customer Services Advice Line service is well established, offering older people and their carers a contact point for information or signposting. The team can also refer into our services as required.

Our most common enquiries usually include:

- Welfare Benefits
- Travel and leisure (including Blue Badge applications)
- Local services and activities
- Community and social care
- Housing options

The service can usually be accessed by calling in to the Age UK Lancashire office in St George's Rd, St Anne's, by telephone, email, letter, referral from other community services or via one of Age UK Lancashire's other services. Home visits are usually provided for people unable to access the office, complex cases and lengthy form-filling. Our telephone and email service operates Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm (via our 0300 303 1234 number) with an out of hours answerphone facility which gives the customer the option of ringing the Age UK National Advice Line for support out of hours (open 8am-7pm, 365 days per year).

The service works in partnership with a number of local key partners, including the Department for Work and Pensions, Welfare Rights, Pension Wise, Disability Information, Community Mental Health Team, Extensive Care Team, New Fylde Housing, Fylde CA, Care & Repair, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, Hospital Discharge Team, Trinity Hospice, Social Services, Stroke Association, Alzheimer's Association, Parkinson's Society, Alzheimer's Society and Lytham Hospital Dementia services.

The service provided by Age UK Lancashire during this 12-month period has identified over £1,344,538.24 per annum in unclaimed benefits across the county, with £245,395.64 of that figure being for Fylde residents of State Pension age. This money is most often spent in the local economy.

**Age UK Lancashire**  
Wellbeing Centre, Moorgate,  
Ormskirk, L39 4RY

t 0300 303 1234  
e [admin@ageuklancs.org.uk](mailto:admin@ageuklancs.org.uk)  
[www.ageuklancs.org.uk](http://www.ageuklancs.org.uk)



### **Further Background**

Our team I&A team has increased significantly in the last 12 months, now consisting of 3 full time advisers, an I&A manager (28 hours), one volunteer (7 hours), and we have an additional adviser recruited who will work part time from mid April.

We receive continued support from a volunteer who covers the reception desk during drop-in sessions, 'meeting and greeting' clients who come into the office. She can offer information, signposting and will refer to the I&A team for any clients requiring further help.

Age UK Lancashire has a comprehensive mandatory training plan for both staff and volunteers. We have invested in a high-quality online training resource via ME Learning which enables many more staff and volunteers to access up-to-date training and undertake courses at their convenience. Regular meetings are usually held with all the volunteers to update them and provide general support. We make sure they are familiar with the standards, policies and procedures set by the Information and Advice Quality Standard. Training includes Basic Life Support, Safeguarding Adults level one, Safeguarding Children level one, Dementia Awareness, Information Governance, Mental Capacity Act, and Fire Safety Awareness. We have recently updated our mandatory training to include LGBTQ Awareness, Domestic Abuse, PREVENT, and Infection Control, as well as further training on safeguarding adults who may be at risk of self-harm.

The Information and Advice staff also undertake training on Pension Age Welfare benefits, Social/Community Care, Housing, Charity Log (in house Database), Information & Advice Quality Program training meetings, The Care Act, and General Data Protection Regulation. The team have all undertaken additional training relating to Scams Awareness. An additional training session will be delivered in the summer by Trading Standards, and this will be available for all Fylde staff to attend.

### **Quality**

We continue to hold the nationally recognized Age UK Information and Advice Quality Programme (IAQP) which was successfully renewed in April 2021, and the Advice Quality Standard which are rigorous and robust processes to ensure we are delivering a service that meets all their requirements. We are in the process of renewing this accreditation. We also hold the ISO 9001 and the Age UK organisational standard.

### **Promotion and Engagement**

We continue to support the Older People's Forum and the FAB group and we keep in contact with the social groups in the area. We participate in fortnightly Dementia Hub zoom meetings, and are hopeful that face to face meetings can resume in August. We continue to refer people to Just Good Friends in St Annes, Lancashire Carers, Carers Count and Alzheimer's Singing For The Brain. We hosted an afternoon

**Age UK Lancashire**  
Wellbeing Centre, Moorgate,  
Ormskirk, L39 4RY

t 0300 303 1234  
e [admin@ageuklancs.org.uk](mailto:admin@ageuklancs.org.uk)  
www.ageuklancs.org.uk



tea event in the autumn at Lytham Hall, and hope to host Scams Awareness events later this year.

### Campaigns

Age UK Lancashire has supported the following national campaigns:

- Care In Crisis
- Winter Warmth and Winter Health
- Painful Journeys
- Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness
- Switched off, saving the free TV license for older people
- Campaign with Ed Balls raising awareness of social care systems and costs, particularly relating to dementia
- Digital Inclusion
- Work with Good Things Foundation to provide on line training through Learn My Way

**Age UK Lancashire**  
Wellbeing Centre, Moorgate,  
Ormskirk, L39 4RY

t 0300 303 1234  
e [admin@ageuklancs.org.uk](mailto:admin@ageuklancs.org.uk)  
[www.ageuklancs.org.uk](http://www.ageuklancs.org.uk)



**Appendices**

Appendix A – Case Study

Case study attached as a separate document

Appendix B - Profile Data for Fylde 2021 Q1-2

TOPIC OF ENQUIRY	NUMBER OF ENQUIRIES
Age UK Services	4
Benefits	207
Community Care	36
Consumer	56
Health Conditions	1
Health Services	4
Housing	12
Legal	0
Other money/debt	12
Residential Care	2
Travel	33
Nationality and Immigration	0
Grand Total	368

**Age UK Lancashire**  
Wellbeing Centre, Moorgate,  
Ormskirk, L39 4RY

t 0300 303 1234  
e [admin@ageuklancs.org.uk](mailto:admin@ageuklancs.org.uk)  
[www.ageuklancs.org.uk](http://www.ageuklancs.org.uk)



### Client feedback

Our clients are issued with a feedback form at the end of their service. The results of these during this reporting period are that:

Your benefit claim was successful – 92.86 % agreed

Your general wellbeing has improved – 100 % agreed

You feel more independent or less isolated – 92.86 % agreed

Your knowledge of where to go for advice has increased - 92.86 % agreed

You were satisfied with the service and would recommend it to others - 100 % agreed

Average score 1-5

Staff were friendly and knowledgeable - 5 out of 5

I was treated with respect – 5 out of 5

My privacy and confidentiality were ensured - 5 out of 5

The service met my expectations – 5 out of 5

I received the service at the right time for me - 5 out of 5

How likely are you to recommend our service? - 5 out of 5

**Age UK Lancashire**  
Wellbeing Centre, Moorgate,  
Ormskirk, L39 4RY

t 0300 303 1234  
e [admin@ageuklancs.org.uk](mailto:admin@ageuklancs.org.uk)  
[www.ageuklancs.org.uk](http://www.ageuklancs.org.uk)





### Client comments

“Paula was simply brilliant. Kind, patient, helpful, knowledgeable. Paula's kindness, discretion, made the process so much easier. It's hard when being independent to ask for help, and talk about personal issues, medical, financial, wellbeing etc. Paula made this possible. Lots of smiles too. Thank you Paula.”

“I found Paula to be caring and considerate at a stressful time for me and made what could have been stressful filling in the long form much easier thank you”

“The whole experience was so well done by Paula I felt at ease and confident that process would be achieved in a good way”

“I cannot thank you enough. Special thanks to PAULA. I had no idea of the available help out there, or any idea at all how to access help, advice or financial support. Your assistance has been brilliant. I could not, would not have been able to complete the confusing unclear forms, answer the questions without Paula's kind help and support. Contact with your service has completely changed my situation for the better improving my overall wellbeing immensely. Thank you.”

“Paula's helpfulness was invaluable. i could not have completed this application without her. there was a lot to do and she did it in a very efficient way with a terrific disposition, I would say she is an asset to you and your clients”

**Age UK Lancashire**  
Wellbeing Centre, Moorgate,  
Ormskirk, L39 4RY

t 0300 303 1234  
e [admin@ageuklancs.org.uk](mailto:admin@ageuklancs.org.uk)  
[www.ageuklancs.org.uk](http://www.ageuklancs.org.uk)

