

**Learning visit report  
Age UK Wandsworth 12658**

<b>1.1 Date of visit:</b> 10/07/18	<b>1.2 Name of visiting Funding Manager:</b> Ciaran Rafferty	<b>1.3 People met with:</b> RC; PB
<b>1.4 Programme Area &amp; Outcomes:</b> Reducing Poverty\More people accessing debt and legal services		
<b>1.5 Purpose of the award:</b> £117,600 over three years towards the salary and running costs of expanding the Advice and Support Service.		
<b>Grant start date: 01/11/2015</b>		<b>Grant end date: 01/11/2018</b>
<b>Project progress and difference made</b>		
<p><b>2.1 Project Outcome 1:</b> Older people in Wandsworth will experience reduced stress and anxiety as a result of better access to advice on benefits, housing, finance and local services, leading to improved wellbeing.</p> <p><b>Progress made:</b> Following a feedback questionnaire 30% of those responding reported reduced stress and anxiety and 37% said they worried less about financial issues. 33% reported an improvement in wellbeing and 15% an improvement in their health as a result of using this service. On average, the project provided 700 face to face advice sessions, around 900 telephone enquiries and 3,000 information leaflets.</p>		
<p><b>2.2 Project Outcome 2:</b> Older people in Wandsworth on low incomes will have improved economic wellbeing as a result of increased levels of income generated by advice services.</p> <p><b>Progress made:</b> In one 12-month period the charity recorded c£700,000 in benefit gains.</p>		
<p><b>2.3 Project Outcome 3:</b> Older people in Wandsworth have improved confidence and self-esteem, as a result of having more choice and control over the issues that affect them, helping them to live more independently.</p> <p><b>Progress made:</b> From the questionnaire mentioned above 41% of respondents reported that their confidence had improved and 18% said that if they were in a similar situation in the future they would be better able to deal with it. 88% said they were now more confident about going for help and knowing where to go.</p>		
<p><b>2.4 Project Outcome 4:</b> Reduced isolation amongst older people through providing a gateway to</p>		

other Age UK Wandsworth services such as Be a Friend, Out and About, Carers' Support and Garden Friends and other local services.

**Progress made:**

11% said they were more able to socialise as a result of benefitting from the service and 37% went on to use other services provided by the charity.

**Impact and learning: Funding Manager comments**

**Impact:** This has been a very important and heavily-used project and has covered a range of issues presented by service users through a holistic approach. The project is all the richer and more valuable for taking this approach but there are, of course, implications on a small-staffed service and organisation – especially where some older people need quite significant hand-holding.

**Learning:** There has been an increase in demand on the project since the previous year – usually arising from new welfare legislation and processes which many older people (and their families) have found very difficult to navigate and access as some new systems are very complex. The organisation has said there has been a notable increase in the number of older people in dire poverty. Over the full period of the grant the charity has seen problems faced by clients being more complex and more experiencing crisis.

**Learning for the City Bridge Trust:** Older people in need are experiencing more complex issues and that there are difficulties and hardships caused for those in their 60s, still of working age but not working, or in very low paid part-time work. Staff in agencies such as this and in advice services in general will have more demands on their time and will often have to deal with more complex cases. It is interesting to note, also, that this client group are reluctant to seek support using digital means/new technology which, if they were to embrace, may help organisations such as this to meet increasing demand.