

Report for November 2015 Area Board



I continue to keep very busy supporting local people. It may seem like “same old, same old”, but that is very untrue as with every new client comes a new variety of issues which are particular to them. One size definitely does not fit all!

For the next few months I will be concentrating on helping those who struggle to heat their homes. There is some grant money available for those in Fuel Poverty ie where 10% of the household income is spent on fuel. Please spread the word so that I can support as many as possible this winter. If anyone is keen to donate to the Grant Pot, again, let me know.

Meanwhile some statistics for the Malmesbury Board area. These are full year figures from October 2014 to the end of September 2015

During this time I supported **89** individual clients, of whom 70% were women and 30% were men. 96% considered themselves to be White British ethnicity.

Client Age Ranges:

Under 60 years	12%
60-70 years	24%
70-80 years	24%
80-90 years	33%
Over 90 years	7%

57% of all clients contacted me directly and a further 17% were referred from family members. Only 26% were referred from other sources, eg, Adult Social Care, GPs, Home from Hospital. Almost 74% of clients were new people with whom I had no previous contact. They found the service through the articles I submit to Parish Magazines and meeting me at Lunch Clubs/Coffee mornings which I had visited giving the service publicity. Few of these clients had sought help elsewhere. Many of my clients (72%) do not ask for a visit from me, but receive the information via phone, email or at social events. Often this will be simple, single and specific information. We are very fortunate to have a dedicated CAB advisor working in this area specifically to assist with financial matters, eg benefits checks. This is funded by a grant from Comic Relief and many of my clients are referred to him for a financial “check up”. More complex issues often require multiple visits and 41% of the clients whom I visit need a follow up visit to ensure that they have information and support specific to their particular needs.

What are the problems?

Client concerns are fairly equally split between money, social isolation, home and personal safety, transport and health. Money worries are the main concern with 48% contacting me about this. 75% of these clients didn't understand the benefit system or how to access it. Heating bills were also on the list of concerns with 7% of clients admitting that they found it very hard to fund their fuel bills. Falling oil prices may have helped to alleviate worries and this may be reflected in later statistics. Over 70% felt that they could manage their own finances and only 1 client was in debt. However 69% of clients needed support to ensure that they were receiving the correct benefits (this is the work being done by CAB as mentioned above). When checking on fuel costs, 80% of clients managed to save money on their fuel bills following intervention and 85% felt less concerned about finances after talking their issues through with me.

When asked about contact with their friends and family, 33% of clients admitted that they have less than one contact per week with 9% never seeing anyone “from one week to the next”. Only 9% have daily contact with the outside world. 32% of my clients consider themselves to be housebound, 43% felt that they were unable to leave the house. 17% didn’t go out as they didn’t know what activities were available to them or how to access them.

42% of clients had suffered falls during the last 12 months. 95% regarded the reason as being due to health related problems and I was able to refer 25% to other organisations for extra support, eg grab rails, access ramps fitted, balance classes.

Impact

The beneficial impact on clients is huge. 80% felt that their needs had been fully met and a further 15% said that their needs had been partially met – that makes a huge 95% positive impact. Some client impact statements:

- ✓ *‘Client suffered polio as a child and with age his mobility is declining. He needed some specialist equipment which was sourced via Adult Care Services.’*
- ✓ *‘Issues with transport to social groups because out of LINK area. GNC facilitated compromise between 2 LINK schemes to arrange transport. Client now attends social morning every week.’*
- ✓ *‘Local befriender found for client. Client feels more networked into their locality and less lonely as a result ‘*
- ✓ *‘Client is much happier that she can cope financially now as her income is increased by £54 a week through having Attendance Allowance added’*

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