

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited
Company Limited by Guarantee
Unaudited Financial Statements
31 March 2018

CENSIS

Chartered accountant
Exchange Building
66 Church Street
Hartlepool
TS24 7DN

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2018

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West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)

Year ended 31 March 2018

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2018.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited
Charity registration number	1084632
Company registration number	02994776
Principal office and registered office	The Community Centre Miers Avenue Hartlepool TS24 9JQ

The trustees

D Wise	
C J Simmons	
J E Shaw	
S Griffin	
R W Cook	
T Rogan	(Resigned 9 August 2017)

Company secretary	V Evens
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Accountants	Censis Chartered accountant Exchange Building 66 Church Street Hartlepool TS24 7DN
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Structure, governance and management

A board of 6 trustees, who meet bi monthly, administer the charity. There are subcommittees covering finance and staffing.

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2018

Objectives and activities

The objects of the charity are to:

- (1) improve the conditions of life of residents of Hartlepool by advancing education and providing recreational facilities including by managing a community centre; and
- (2) relieve poverty, sickness and distress of the residents of North East England, including by providing advice on welfare benefits and generally.

In planning our activities for the year we kept in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit at our trustee meetings.

The provision of a resource centre offers much needed support to the residents of Hartlepool. The centre is fully resourced, Advice workers are available throughout the day offering advice on welfare and benefits together with any other advice which may be required.

Strategic report

The following sections for achievements and performance and financial review form the strategic report of the charity.

Achievements and performance

The centre continues to serve the local community and other areas throughout Hartlepool. Our advice team is kept up to date with the many changes to our society and is highly regarded within the advice sector. This high regard has lead other organisations within the third sector to seek our support in advising local residents throughout the Hartelpool area.

With the support of our funders, the resource centre will continue to support and advise the general public. The trustees would like to thank our staff and all our volunteers for their continued support.

Financial review

The unrestricted funds of the charity as at 31 March 2018 amount to £55,593 of which free reserves (that is those not tied up in fixed assets) amount to £4,905.

The trustees have examined the requirement for free reserves and they consider the charity should aim to provide a contingency fund £28,000 for specific purposes such as redundancy and other contingencies. The trustees also consider that it is prudent to ensure that there are sufficient free reserves at a level which equates to approximately six months unrestricted expenditure. This provides sufficient funds to cover support costs, management and administration and to respond to emergency applications for grants which arise from time to time.

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2018

The trustees' annual report and the strategic report were approved on 23 July 2018 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



D Wise
Trustee

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Year ended 31 March 2018

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2018.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2018

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



CENSIS
Chartered accountant

Exchange Building
66 Church Street
Hartlepool
TS24 7DN

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Statement of Financial Activities (including income and expenditure account)

31 March 2018

		Unrestricted funds £	2018 Restricted funds £	Total funds £	2017 Total funds £
	Note				
Income and endowments					
Donations and legacies	5	69,998	252,713	322,711	322,737
Charitable activities	6	4,009	—	4,009	1,457
Other trading activities	7	19,594	—	19,594	24,082
Total income		<u>93,601</u>	<u>252,713</u>	<u>346,314</u>	<u>348,276</u>
Expenditure					
Expenditure on raising funds:					
Costs of other trading activities	8	265	—	265	—
Expenditure on charitable activities	9	146,321	252,713	399,034	364,717
Total expenditure		<u>146,586</u>	<u>252,713</u>	<u>399,299</u>	<u>364,717</u>
Net expenditure and net movement in funds					
		<u>(52,985)</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>(52,985)</u>	<u>(16,441)</u>
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		108,578	—	108,578	125,019
Total funds carried forward		<u>55,593</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>55,593</u>	<u>108,578</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.
All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 9 to 16 form part of these financial statements.

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Statement of Financial Position

31 March 2018

		2018 £	2017 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	14	50,688	39,849
Current assets			
Debtors	15	5,146	5,347
Cash at bank and in hand		6,386	64,322
		<u>11,532</u>	<u>69,669</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	<u>6,627</u>	<u>940</u>
Net current assets		<u>4,905</u>	<u>68,729</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>55,593</u>	<u>108,578</u>
Net assets		<u>55,593</u>	<u>108,578</u>
Funds of the charity			
Unrestricted funds		<u>55,593</u>	<u>108,578</u>
Total charity funds	18	<u>55,593</u>	<u>108,578</u>

For the year ending 31 March 2018 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476;
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

These financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue on 23 July 2018, and are signed on behalf of the board by:



D Wise
Trustee

The notes on pages 9 to 16 form part of these financial statements.

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended 31 March 2018

	2018 £	2017 £
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net expenditure	(52,985)	(16,441)
<i>Adjustments for:</i>		
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	1,846	1,911
<i>Changes in:</i>		
Trade and other debtors	201	(394)
Trade and other creditors	5,687	—
Cash generated from operations	(45,251)	(14,924)
Net cash used in operating activities	<u>(45,251)</u>	<u>(14,924)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of tangible assets	(12,685)	—
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(12,685)</u>	<u>—</u>
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(57,936)	(14,924)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	64,322	79,246
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	<u>6,386</u>	<u>64,322</u>

The notes on pages 9 to 16 form part of these financial statements.

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2018

1. General information

The charity is a private company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales and a registered charity in England and Wales. The address of the registered office is The Community Centre, Miers Avenue, Hartlepool, TS24 9JQ.

2. Statement of compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland', the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and the Charities Act 2011.

3. Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and liabilities and investment properties measured at fair value through income or expenditure.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

Going concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported. These estimates and judgements are continually reviewed and are based on experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees to further any of the charity's purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular future project or commitment.

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure declared by the donor or through the terms of an appeal, and fall into one of two sub-classes: restricted income funds or endowment funds.

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2018

3. Accounting policies *(continued)*

Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when entitlement has passed to the charity; it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the charity and the amount can be reliably measured. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- income from donations or grants is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the gift, receipt is probable and its amount can be measured reliably.
- legacy income is recognised when receipt is probable and entitlement is established.
- income from donated goods is measured at the fair value of the goods unless this is impractical to measure reliably, in which case the value is derived from the cost to the donor or the estimated resale value. Donated facilities and services are recognised in the accounts when received if the value can be reliably measured. No amounts are included for the contribution of general volunteers.
- income from contracts for the supply of services is recognised with the delivery of the contracted service. This is classified as unrestricted funds unless there is a contractual requirement for it to be spent on a particular purpose and returned if unspent, in which case it may be regarded as restricted.

Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is classified under headings of the statement of financial activities to which it relates:

- expenditure on raising funds includes the costs of all fundraising activities, events, non-charitable trading activities, and the sale of donated goods.
- expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs incurred by a charity in undertaking activities that further its charitable aims for the benefit of its beneficiaries, including those support costs and costs relating to the governance of the charity apportioned to charitable activities.
- other expenditure includes all expenditure that is neither related to raising funds for the charity nor part of its expenditure on charitable activities.

All costs are allocated to expenditure categories reflecting the use of the resource. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs are apportioned between the activities they contribute to on a reasonable, justifiable and consistent basis.

Tangible assets

Tangible assets are initially recorded at cost, and subsequently stated at cost less any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses. Any tangible assets carried at revalued amounts are recorded at the fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2018

3. Accounting policies *(continued)*

Tangible assets *(continued)*

An increase in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of a revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, unless it reverses a charge for impairment that has previously been recognised as expenditure within the statement of financial activities. A decrease in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, except to which it offsets any previous revaluation gain, in which case the loss is shown within other recognised gains and losses on the statement of financial activities.

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost or valuation of an asset, less its residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Freehold property	-	2% straight line
Equipment	-	25% reducing balance

Defined contribution plans

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised as an expense in the period in which the related service is provided. Prepaid contributions are recognised as an asset to the extent that the prepayment will lead to a reduction in future payments or a cash refund.

When contributions are not expected to be settled wholly within 12 months of the end of the reporting date in which the employees render the related service, the liability is measured on a discounted present value basis. The unwinding of the discount is recognised as an expense in the period in which it arises.

4. Limited by guarantee

West View Advice & Resource Centre is a company limited by guarantee and accordingly does not have a share capital.

Every member of the company undertakes to contribute such amount as may be required not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charitable company in the event of its being wound up while he or she is a member, or within one year after he or she ceases to be a member.

5. Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2018 £
Donations			
Donations	1,199	—	1,199
Council Ward Budgets	—	—	—
Workers Education Association	—	—	—

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2018

5. Donations and legacies *(continued)*

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2018 £
Grants			
Hadrian Trust	1,000	—	1,000
Hartlepool Borough Council - Community HUB	—	110,000	110,000
Trusthouse Charitable Foundation	11,000	—	11,000
Hartlepool Borough Council	500	—	500
Hartlepool College of Further Education	500	—	500
The Henry Smith Charity	—	22,000	22,000
Cleveland Fire Brigade	1,250	—	1,250
Recognising Excellence	6,550	—	6,550
Kilmarnock Road	7,000	—	7,000
NTUC	—	30,221	30,221
HVDA - Clinical Commissioning Group	39,330	—	39,330
Thirteen Group	200	—	200
Macmillan Cancer Support	—	81,342	81,342
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	1,469	—	1,469
1989 Willan Trust	—	9,150	9,150
	<u>69,998</u>	<u>252,713</u>	<u>322,711</u>
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2017 £
Donations			
Donations	843	—	843
Council Ward Budgets	2,000	—	2,000
Workers Education Association	1,420	—	1,420
Grants			
Hadrian Trust	—	—	—
Hartlepool Borough Council - Community HUB	—	109,494	109,494
Trusthouse Charitable Foundation	—	—	—
Hartlepool Borough Council	—	—	—
Hartlepool College of Further Education	—	—	—
The Henry Smith Charity	—	21,000	21,000
Cleveland Fire Brigade	—	—	—
Recognising Excellence	—	—	—
Kilmarnock Road	25,865	—	25,865
NTUC	—	17,297	17,297
HVDA - Clinical Commissioning Group	21,742	—	21,742
Thirteen Group	28,700	—	28,700
Macmillan Cancer Support	—	84,376	84,376
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	—	—	—
1989 Willan Trust	—	10,000	10,000
	<u>80,570</u>	<u>242,167</u>	<u>322,737</u>

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2018

6. Charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2018 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2017 £
Other	4,009	4,009	1,457	1,457

7. Other trading activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2018 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2017 £
Room & Hall Hire	14,556	14,556	14,550	14,550
Tees Credit Union	3,451	3,451	—	—
Murder Mystery	1,440	1,440	—	—
Rent	—	—	4,000	4,000
Property management fees	—	—	5,532	5,532
	147	147	—	—
	<u>19,594</u>	<u>19,594</u>	<u>24,082</u>	<u>24,082</u>

8. Costs of other trading activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2018 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2017 £
Purchases	265	265	—	—

9. Expenditure on charitable activities by activity type

	Activities undertaken directly £	Total funds 2018 £	Total fund 2017 £
General Fund	125,321	125,321	122,550
Thirteen Group	21,000	21,000	—
Henry Smith & 1989 Willan Trust	31,150	31,150	31,000
Community HUB	110,000	110,000	109,494
MacMillan Cancer Support	81,342	81,342	84,376
NTUC	30,221	30,221	17,297
	<u>399,034</u>	<u>399,034</u>	<u>364,717</u>

10. Net expenditure

Net expenditure is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2018 £	2017 £
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	<u>1,846</u>	<u>1,911</u>

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2018

11. Independent examination fees

	2018	2017
	£	£
Fees payable to the independent examiner for: Independent examination of the financial statements	940	940

12. Staff costs

The total staff costs and employee benefits for the reporting period are analysed as follows:

	2018	2017
	£	£
Wages and salaries	295,009	259,403
Social security costs	19,522	16,694
Employer contributions to pension plans	1,619	—
	<u>316,150</u>	<u>276,097</u>

The average head count of employees during the year was 17 (2017: 16). The average number of full-time equivalent employees during the year is analysed as follows:

	2018	2017
	No.	No.
Charitable activities	16	15
Management & governance	1	1
	<u>17</u>	<u>16</u>

No employee received employee benefits of more than £60,000 during the year (2017: Nil).

13. Trustee remuneration and expenses

no remuneration or other benefits from employment with the charity or a related entity were received by the trustees; or

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2018

14. Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold property £	Equipment £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2017	50,676	28,948	79,624
Additions	12,685	—	12,685
At 31 March 2018	<u>63,361</u>	<u>28,948</u>	<u>92,309</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2017	12,623	27,152	39,775
Charge for the year	1,267	579	1,846
At 31 March 2018	<u>13,890</u>	<u>27,731</u>	<u>41,621</u>
Carrying amount			
At 31 March 2018	<u>49,471</u>	<u>1,217</u>	<u>50,688</u>
At 31 March 2017	<u>38,053</u>	<u>1,796</u>	<u>39,849</u>

15. Debtors

	2018 £	2017 £
Prepayments and accrued income	<u>5,146</u>	<u>5,347</u>

16. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2018 £	2017 £
Accruals and deferred income	940	940
Social security and other taxes	5,456	—
Other creditors	231	—
	<u>6,627</u>	<u>940</u>

17. Pensions and other post retirement benefits

Defined contribution plans

The amount recognised in income or expenditure as an expense in relation to defined contribution plans was £1,619 (2017: £Nil).

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2018

18. Analysis of charitable funds

Unrestricted funds

	At 1 April 2017	Income	Expenditure	At 31 March 2018
	£	£	£	£
General Fund	59,578	93,601	(125,586)	27,593
Thirteen Group	21,000	—	(21,000)	—
Contingency Fund	28,000	—	—	28,000
	<u>108,578</u>	<u>93,601</u>	<u>(146,586)</u>	<u>55,593</u>

Restricted funds

	At 1 April 2017	Income	Expenditure	At 31 March 2018
	£	£	£	£
Community HUB	—	110,000	(110,000)	—
MacMillan Cancer Support	—	81,342	(81,342)	—
Henry Smith & 1989 Willan Trust	—	31,150	(31,150)	—
NTUC	—	30,221	(30,221)	—
	<u>—</u>	<u>252,713</u>	<u>(252,713)</u>	<u>—</u>

19. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds	Total Funds 2018	Total Funds 2017
	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	50,688	50,688	39,849
Current assets	11,532	11,532	69,669
Creditors less than 1 year	(6,627)	(6,627)	(940)
Net assets	<u>55,593</u>	<u>55,593</u>	<u>108,578</u>

West View Advice
& Resource Centre Ltd



West View Advice & Resource Centre Ltd

Annual Report 2017 to 2018



**Serving the community of Hartlepool
Delivering advice for over 30 years**

Company Registration No. 2994776 Charity No. 1084632

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited. A Company Limited by Guarantee, whose registered address is The Community Centre, Miers Avenue, Hartlepool, TS24 9JQ. Incorporated in England and Wales.

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What services do we offer?

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- Home Energy Service
- Industrial Injuries

Cancer Support in the Community Project

Debt Advice & Peer Review Service Report

Outreach Service Report/Home Visit/General Report

Thanks to our Funders

Organisational Details

Annual File Review

Client Satisfaction Survey Results

WEST VIEW ADVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE

BACKGROUND

West View Advice & Resource Centre Limited (WVARC) was established in 1983 and is a member of the Advice Service Alliance.

Embedded within the local community and operating from its offices in the West View area of Hartlepool, WVARC is a not-for-profit organisation that has been providing advice and support within the Hartlepool area for more than 30 years and, since August 2016, throughout the Tees Valley area.

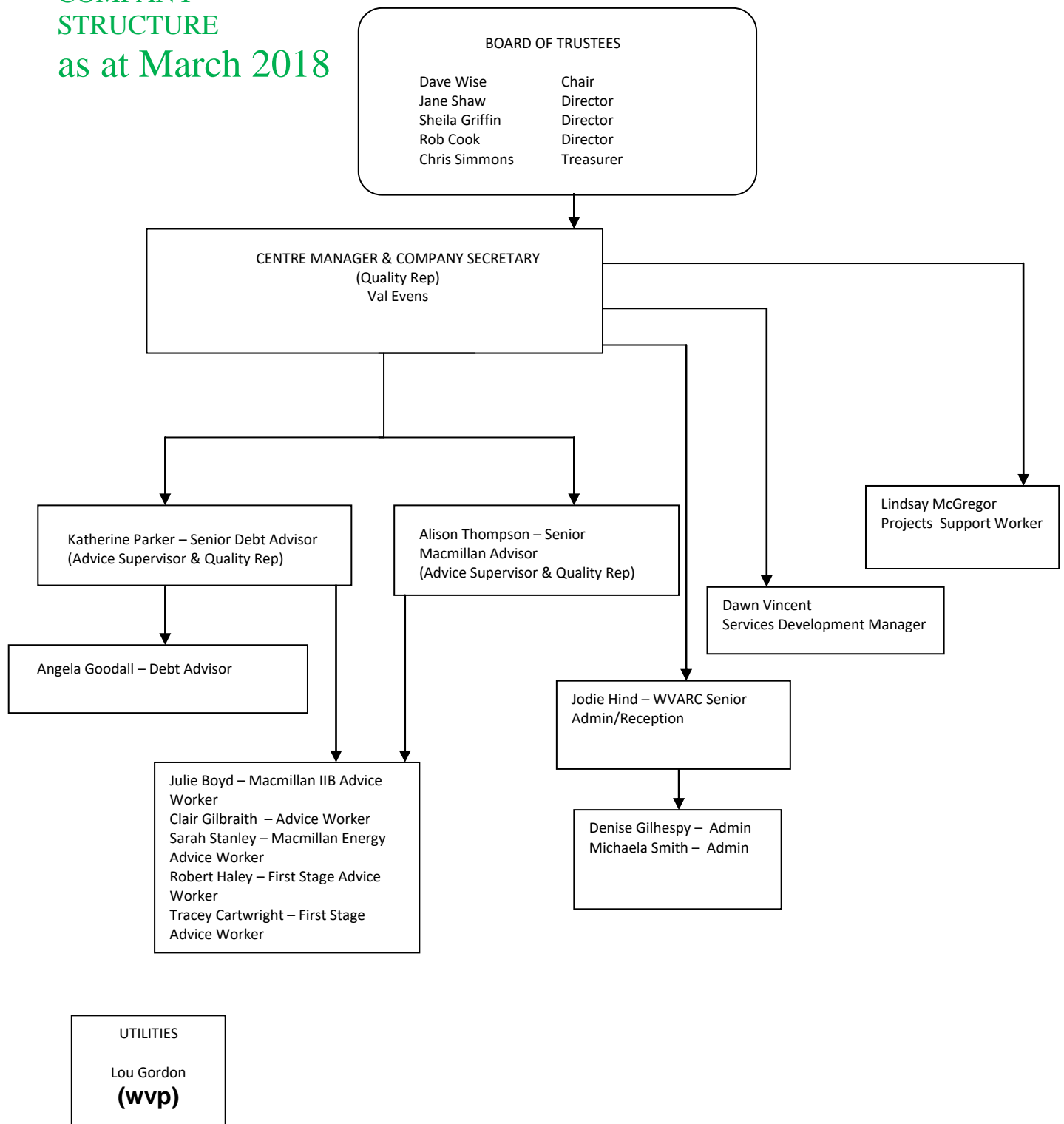
The main business of WVARC is currently to offer welfare benefits advice and support to disadvantaged people within Hartlepool on issues such as debt, housing benefit, energy efficiency, disability benefits and welfare rights. Services are offered via centre based appointments, outreach work and limited home visits for housebound clients.

Due to the government's austerity measures, West View Community Centre was under threat of closure and in 2012, in partnership with West View Project, WVARC moved its services to West View Community Centre. This was to operate and manage an accessible community centre within the Brus ward, (now known as De Bruce due to changes in the ward boundaries) securing existing community services and developing new activities for the benefit of the residents.

The Centre aims to continue to provide for the residents of Hartlepool a resource centre service which is sustainable in the long-term, focusing on the needs of the area. The Centre remains committed to providing a free, confidential and impartial service and aims to be as inclusive as is possible within the local community.

The principal funders for the organisation are Hartlepool Borough Council, Macmillan Cancer Support, Clinical Commissioning Group, Catalyst, Henry Smith Charity, 1989 Willan Trust, Trusthouse Foundation, Sir James Knott Trust, Northern TUC Asbestos Support and Campaign Group and Hadrian Trust.

COMPANY STRUCTURE as at March 2018



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Once again this has been a year of many changes. In July 2017, through working in partnership with Hartlepool Borough Council and becoming part of the Community Hub project, we were pleased to be able to host a library service 3 days per week and a Community Connector accessible 5 days per week. Whilst this is a big change, in particular the refurbishment of the waiting area and the installation of some larger rather Community Hub signs, we still maintain our independence and pride ourselves on the excellent reputation the advice service has earned throughout the years.

Our Macmillan services continue to go from strength to strength, and once again to underpin this we were successful in a joint bid with Stockton CAB, to deliver some additional services for those whose lives have been affected by Cancer. We have started delivering advice services in two GP surgeries, one morning and afternoon per week in Norton and Hartlepool.

Another successful year for our clients, despite all the welfare reforms and government restrictions, once again we have assisted our clients in making £13 million pounds of benefit applications and confirmed £6 million as being awarded with a further £5 million estimated as secured, not yet reported.

As mentioned in last year's report the staff held a Midsummer Murder Mystery night and a good night was had by all. The event raised £1200 which contributes to maintaining our advice services including the Macmillan services. Once again there is some photographic evidence of the event. A Coffee morning held in September raised £400 for Macmillan.

Very pleased to report, that despite the challenges, we have been able to continue to provide our services to those who need them most, none of which could have been achieved without the continued dedication of our staff and volunteers and the continued support of our funders.

Dave Wise

Chairman
April 2018

MANAGERS REPORT

This year saw the start of a new project in partnership with Hartlepool Borough Council. The Community Hub initiative enables residents of Hartlepool to access multiple services under one roof.

Three venues were identified as Community Hubs, which are our own Community Centre (Hub North), The Central Library (Hub Central) and Owton Manor Community Centre (Hub South). For our part of the partnership, we are delivering advice services in our own Centre and as far as reasonably possible we are replicating the services in the other two venues. A new development for us was a change in delivery methods and for the first time we are delivering drop in and form filling drop in sessions on an outreach basis, in addition to regular appointments. Home-visits for the strictly house-bound are continuing on a limited basis (with the exception of Macmillan clients).

During the year we held a Midsummer Murder Mystery evening, which raised a massive £1200, which helps to sustain all of our services including the Macmillan services.



I am grateful to our staff who go that extra mile and clearly care for the clients and not that the clients exist for the benefit of the organisation. The organisation is stronger than when the organisation was first formed in 1983.

Once again this year we have secured over £6 million in extra benefits for our clients, in addition to bringing extra services such as the re-opening of the library, the on-site Community Connector (originally a Community Health Advisor) and access to a dedicated telephone/computer to access HBC services.

In May, we will undergo the bi-annual, external audit of our Advice Service, to maintain the Advice Quality Mark, in the matter categories of Advice General Casework, Housing, Employment and Debt.

We do face the ongoing challenge of securing funding to sustain our services and each year it gets more difficult, as funders want new, innovative projects. In reality WVARC is not new, but our services are innovative, as we change delivery to meet the needs of our clients.

This year we have seen huge changes both physically and in the way we deliver our services, as a Community Hub. This essentially means that the residents of Hartlepool are able to access more services in their local communities, for example, our Community Hub now contains a part time library service and a Community Connector on site. We offer free telephone access to the Civic Centre and as the Hub develops we anticipate many more services becoming available in the Hub. Physically the building has been re-vamped and the reception and waiting area have been reconstructed and refurbished to accommodate the additional services.

Valerie A Evens
Macmillan Centre Manager
April 2018

WHAT SERVICES DO WE OFFER?

We provide free, confidential and impartial advice to help the people of Hartlepool resolve their problems. We are equipped to deal with issues spanning from debt to housing to welfare benefits.

Areas of Advice covered

Welfare Benefits	Disability Benefits
Housing Benefits	Debt
Form Filling	Family/Personal
Calculations	Employment
Home visits for Macmillan	Energy Efficiency & Tariff Switching

We helped over 5000 individuals with over 7000 interviews being carried out. However, we are not just here for times of crisis as preventative advice is also available.

We recognise that more and more people want to see us at different locations and thus the services which we offer are town-wide. Our outreach services are well attended and we are always looking to ensure that advice is available in the most deprived areas. In the coming year we will be delivering in 4 locations.

Hours and Times of Availability

From April 2018 In Centre at Miers Avenue

Monday - Thursday	9.00 am – 5.00 pm
Friday	9.00 am – 4.00 pm

Drop-in Sessions (times may be subject to change)

➤ Monday	9.00 am – 12.00 noon	–	West View Advice & Resource Centre, Miers Avenue
➤ Tuesday	9.00 am – 12.30 pm	–	Kilmarnock Road Resource Centre, Kilmarnock Road
➤ Wednesday	9.00 am – 12.00 noon	–	Community Hub South, Wynyard Road
➤ Thursday	10.00 am – 3.30 pm	-	Community Hub Central, York Road
➤ Friday	9.00 am – 12.30 pm	–	West View Advice & Resource Centre, Miers Avenue

Form Filling Drop in Sessions (times may be subject to change)

➤ Tuesday	9.00 am to 12.00 noon	West View Advice & Resource Centre, Miers Avenue
➤ Wednesday	10.00 am to 3.30 pm	Community Hub Central, York Road
➤ Thursday	9.00 am to 12 noon	Community Hub South, Wynyard Road

The Community Centre

The Community Centre

In April 2017, the beginning of our financial year, we were appointed by Hartlepool Borough Council to host Community Hub North, one of three new Community Hubs in Hartlepool.

The Hub is focused on improving health, reducing health inequalities, improving employability and reducing long term unemployment and is a “one-stop-shop” offering a range of advice, guidance, health, learning, employment and community support and services.

WVARC’s established trustworthy reputation with residents of Hartlepool makes it a valuable portal encouraging residents to access all services required by them which are housed within the Hub, including a public library and Community Connector (who is an experienced Health Advisor) both now based in our Community Centre.

As well as our new Hub services, we continue to provide a safe, comfortable and welcoming venue for the diverse local community groups and clubs who meet regularly at our Community Centre and we are always willing to try out new activities to be offered at the centre to local residents, while continuing to host our long-standing popular groups in our main hall including archery sessions, bingo, Slimming World sessions and line dancing. Other smaller groups enjoy safe and private rooms for their arts, crafts and other social activities.

The centre is a convenient local venue for vocational and non-vocational courses and interest groups as well as access to our information, advice and guidance services and resources. It also hosts local councillor ward surgeries.

We continue to host one-to-one pre-booked appointments with the National Careers Service for clients wishing to create CVs and apply for jobs.

We have long been Macmillan supporters as well as offering a Macmillan Advisor Service, giving advice on welfare benefits, energy efficiency and industrial injury claims, and this year we hosted an extremely popular and well-received Murder Mystery Night, “Murder on the SS Titania”, a three course meal during which (between courses) members of our staff enacted a mini comedy drama as entertainment, raising over £1200.

We also now host weekly, funded by the Clinical Commissioning Group, a Cancer Support meeting and “Positive Movers” exercise group for gentle exercises aimed particularly at vulnerable residents.

As always, our continued success relies on sufficient funding being raised to cover our activities and this year we were delighted and grateful to continue to receive from Henry Smith Charity a grant funding my own position as well as receiving new grants for core funding from Trusthouse Foundation, Sir James Knott Trust, the 1989 Willan Trust and Hadrian Trust, enabling us to continue to run the Community Centre successfully, channelling the community’s potential and helping to sustain this important community asset for the benefit of our local community.

Lindsay McGregor
Projects Support Worker
April 2018

MACMILLAN ADVICE SERVICE REPORT

Hartlepool & North Tees

MACMILLAN ADVICE SERVICE REPORT

Hartlepool & North Tees

It's been another busy year for the Macmillan Advice Service in Hartlepool, and I am so grateful to still be able to offer this invaluable service to clients, whose lives are affected by cancer.

- 315 Appointments in-centre at West View
- 310 Home Visits made
- 171 Clients seen in Hospital or Outreach Location

It amazes me how after 8 years we can still manage to fill every appointment, every week; it just goes to show how many people need the help.

I attend 2 outreach sessions per week, one at McKenzie House Hartlepool, and another at Norton Medical Centre Billingham. I have only recently started to Cover Norton, which was previously covered by Julie Boyd, who has now moved across to Industrial Injuries full time. I also have in- centre appointments at West View and home visits.

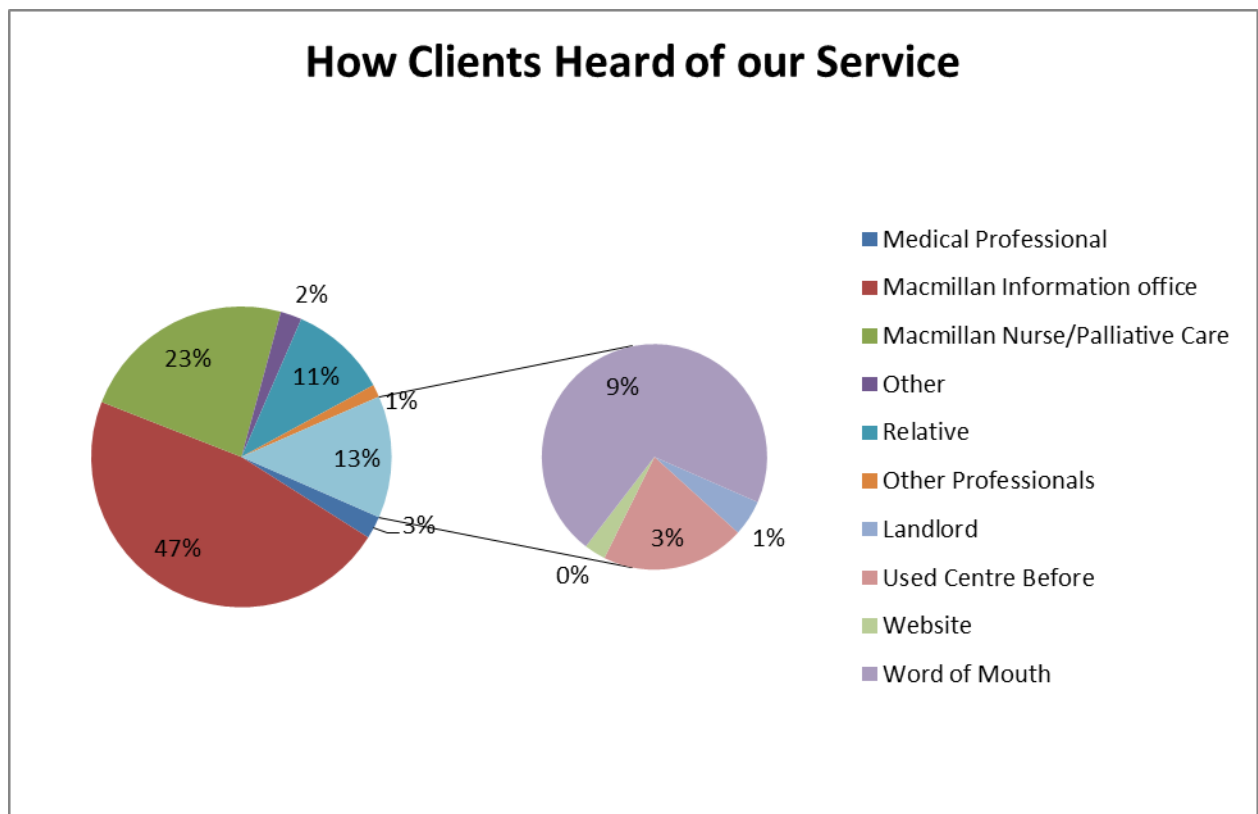
55 GP Surgery Appointments
30 McKenzie House
25 Norton Medical Practice

I can refer clients for energy advice, with our Macmillan Energy Advisor Sarah, and also refer to the debt team. There are quite a number of clients who are diagnosed with cancer, take a huge drop in income and then struggle to pay bills, mortgage and such, and end up in a situation that starts to get out of control. I also make clients aware of the Cancer Support Group and exercise class, both held weekly at the centre.

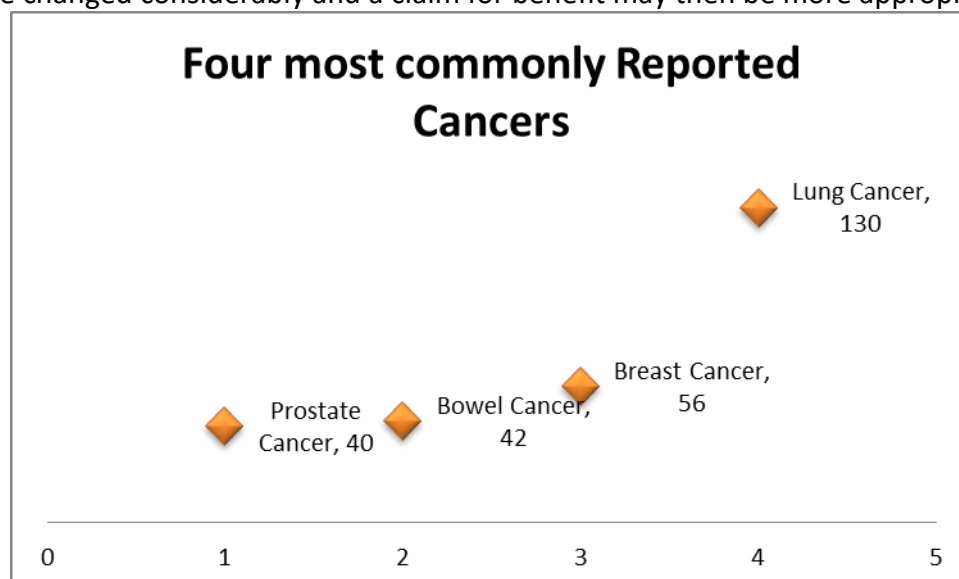
I make a lot of applications for Macmillan Grants, which help clients with things such as help towards fares to travel to hospital for treatment, clothing, as they may gain or lose weight, and help towards the increasing costs of energy when not feeling too well.

- o Total confirmed as gained in benefit income (regular ongoing payments)
£1,171,726.40
- o Total gained through one off payments (grants, compensation and arrears, etc)
£ 505,632.11
- o Total projected gains (applied for but not yet confirmed as awarded)
£ 2,675,032.64

The majority of my referrals are still via Macmillan nurses, hospital nurses, district nurses and other services within the palliative care team, also word of mouth.



Every client seen has a full benefit check carried out, and details taken of their condition and treatment so we can best identify what help may be available, and the best time to make a claim. A client who has just started treatment may not be having a lot of day to day difficulties, but 4 weeks later as they get further into their treatment cycles, their difficulties may have changed considerably and a claim for benefit may then be more appropriate.



There are still some extremely sad situations that seem beyond belief, when one of a couple is diagnosed with cancer, and then the partner is then diagnosed too. This happens more often than you would imagine.

Case Study

Mrs D was a 49 year old lady who had been advised by Housing Hartlepool to attend the service for a full benefit check as she had rent arrears. She attended her appointment at McKenzie House where I cover an outreach session one afternoon a week.

She had not attended 2 previous appointments that had been made for her; this was due to her health problems.

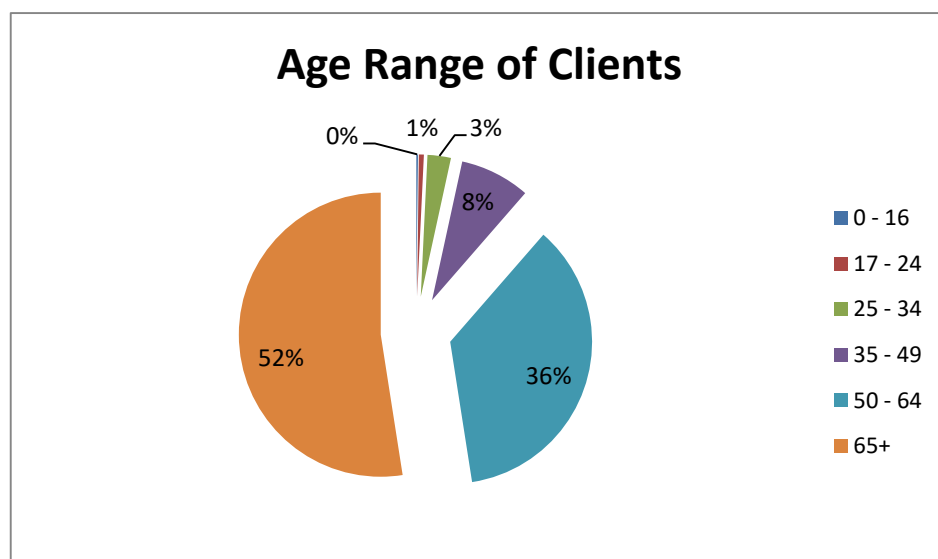
She had been diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour, and was also a full time carer for her son. Mrs D was already receiving Personal Independence Payment, paid at the standard rate, and she had already requested a reconsideration of this decision as she believed it should be paid at the enhanced rate; she had just finished Chemotherapy and was not too well.

I advised, with her permission, that I would contact her GPs surgery, to see if I could obtain medical evidence to assist with the PIP reconsideration, namely evidence for people who are classed as being palliative. I was told that this wasn't appropriate for her, so she needed to await the decision of the reconsideration.

I carried out a full benefit check, and on the information she gave me it appeared that her weekly Income Support being paid was less than the amount it should have been. I rang Income Support section of DWP, who told me that client HAD been sent a form to complete the year before to receive this extra money, and when client had failed to return it they hadn't chased it up. The form was completed over the phone with the client and 3 weeks later she was awarded an extra £62.45 per week Income Support, and also received £3671.00 in backdated money. She was then able to clear her rent arrears.

Sadly this lady passed away a few weeks later, I'm not sure if she ever had her PIP award increased or whether she got to spend some of her arrears on herself.

The age range of service users is vast: I have a young child with cancer, who is 6 years old, and am also seeing clients well into their 80s and 90s.



I enjoy my job very much, and gain such satisfaction from helping people who need help, it doesn't really get better than that.

What some of our clients said about our service:

- ❖ Excellent friendly service
- ❖ Advisor was very friendly & helpful we felt a lot better after discussion with her as we were really worried about our loss of earnings
- ❖ Very pleased with advice given to me. Went to great lengths to do as much as possible for us. Very very pleased
- ❖ I will strongly agree the advice has improved my life if the benefit is awarded.

Alison Thompson
SENIOR MACMILLAN ADVISOR

MACMILLAN ENERGY ADVICE REPORT Macmillan Home Energy Service Report

It is hard to believe that another year has flown by, seeing the project go from strength to strength with referrals coming in from a variety of sources, largely internally from our Macmillan Benefit Advisors as well as Macmillan information centres, volunteers and word of mouth. Research shows that the financial impact of cancer has serious knock-on effects to the wellbeing of people affected by cancer. It places a huge amount of additional pressure on people at a time when they should be focusing on their treatment and recovery.

As well as being the toughest fight most people will face, cancer is expensive. From filling up the car with fuel for regular trips to hospital, to keeping the heating on because your cancer makes you feel the cold more, to taking a pay cut because you're too ill to work, the costs really add up. It is extremely rewarding when successfully assisting the clients with reducing their gas and electricity bill or managing to clear their energy debt or giving them some advice to reduce their electricity and gas consumption without affecting their need for heating.

Studies with Cancer Research still show that Hartlepool, North Tees and South Tees have a higher diagnosis rate compared to the whole of the UK, a large proportion being that of Lung Cancer in the South Tees area. I have taken part in a variety of events across the Teesside area to promote the services that are available to those diagnosed with cancer. This ranges from Living with and Beyond Cancer, Stay Warm Health Watch, Breathe Easy (British Lung Foundation), Cancer Support Groups and Residents Associations, to name a few.

Throughout the year, my main focus continues to be to assist those affected by cancer with a healthy home check ensuring that they are maintaining the heat needed to aid their recovery during their treatment. With the limited funding streams available, I have still managed to assist with clearing of gas and electricity debt. All the information provided is completely free, independent and impartial.

The main focus is assisting with;

- Advice on keeping warm
- Energy company and tariff switching

- Fuel debt support
- Access to energy discounts and trust funds
- Referral onto home heating and insulation schemes
- Referral for benefit entitlement check
- Access to emergency grant funding

- 568 Healthy Home Checks Carried Out
- 177 Tariff Switches
- 95 Warm Home Discounts Confirmed
- 32 Charis Grants & Macmillan Grants

Almost £10,000 in fuel debt was written off in the period, with estimated savings of £91,898.05 made through our interventions.

Case Study:

Mr X was referred to me for an Energy Visit through the Macmillan Information Centre at James Cook University Hospital. He had been diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer and at the time of the initial visit was receiving palliative care as unable to have any treatment. Due to the progressive nature of the cancer, Mr X has been advised it is terminal. Mr X was extremely weak both physically and mentally, and his wife was emotionally drained as this had come as a big shock to them both. Due to the circumstances, there had been a small drop in income as Mrs X had not been able to go to work as often as she had been assisting with Mr X's (who is retired) needs. However she was extremely concerned by the increase in their energy costs.

During the home visit, Mrs X expressed her concerns that Npower were debiting her account twice within a month which she could not understand. One of the payments taken was £145.75 and the second payment taken was £10.50. Mrs X had received paperwork about her final statements with Npower, but had not approached another supplier so was unsure what was happening. She did not feel she had the emotional strength or willpower to deal with this.

Upon contacting Npower we discovered that, due to a system upgrade, Npower had closed Mr and Mrs X's energy account and re-opened the account on the new system. The outstanding balance on the original account of £201.64 had been transferred to the new account. However, on further enquiry of Npower it transpired that the outstanding balance had not all been transferred and there was still £115.00 outstanding on the old account, hence the 2 direct debits. This balance was then transferred onto the new account bringing the outstanding balance to £316.64 and Npower wanted to increase the Direct Debit to £165.00 per month. Due to the mishandling of the matter by Npower, Mrs X was compensated with £20.00 as a gesture of goodwill.

I changed the clients' tariff to the Macmillan Npower Scheme which brought their monthly payments down to £125.00 per month from £145.00, thus giving the clients a £20.00 per month saving. This special tariff gave the clients a total saving of £480.00 for the period of the Scheme and the existing debt of £316.64 has been written off. I have advised the clients that they will be able to put their heating on as often and for as long as they need in order to keep warm at a capped cost.

This was a huge relief to Mr and Mrs X. Due to the type of cancer Mr X has, he battles to keep warm, and can now do so without worrying about the cost of keeping his home as warm as he needs.

SARAH STANLEY
MACMILLAN ENERGY ADVISOR
APRIL 2018

TUC / Macmillan Asbestos Support and Campaign Group Macmillan Industrial Injuries Benefits Advice Service Overview of the Service

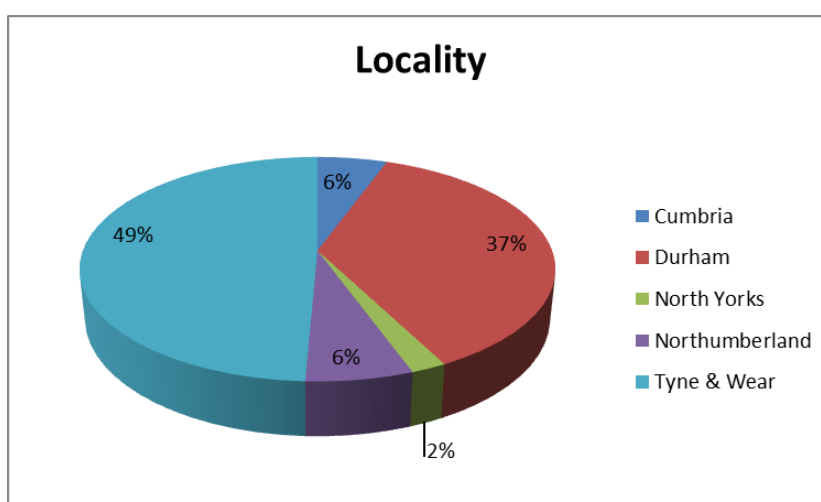
ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

TUC/Macmillan Asbestos Support and Campaign Group
Macmillan Industrial Injuries Benefits Advice Service
Overview of the Service

The Northern TUC/Macmillan Asbestos Support and Campaign Group has been in existence since 2012, and has been working in partnership with West View Advice & Resource Centre since 2015, to deliver its advice services to clients who have been affected by Asbestos related conditions.

The post of Industrial Injuries Benefits Advice Worker is funded through Macmillan and The Northern TUC Asbestos Support and Campaign Group. The service is there to ensure that those affected by asbestos related conditions have access to support, assistance and benefit advice to alleviate financial difficulties.

The year began with one advisor working on the project until another could be recruited in the Summer time. There were then 2 advisors working on the project both part time, while the new member of staff was trained in our procedures and in this specific area of benefits. This continued for the majority of this year and between us we carried out 234 home visits – seeing 127 new cases and 105 ongoing, 174 individuals in total.



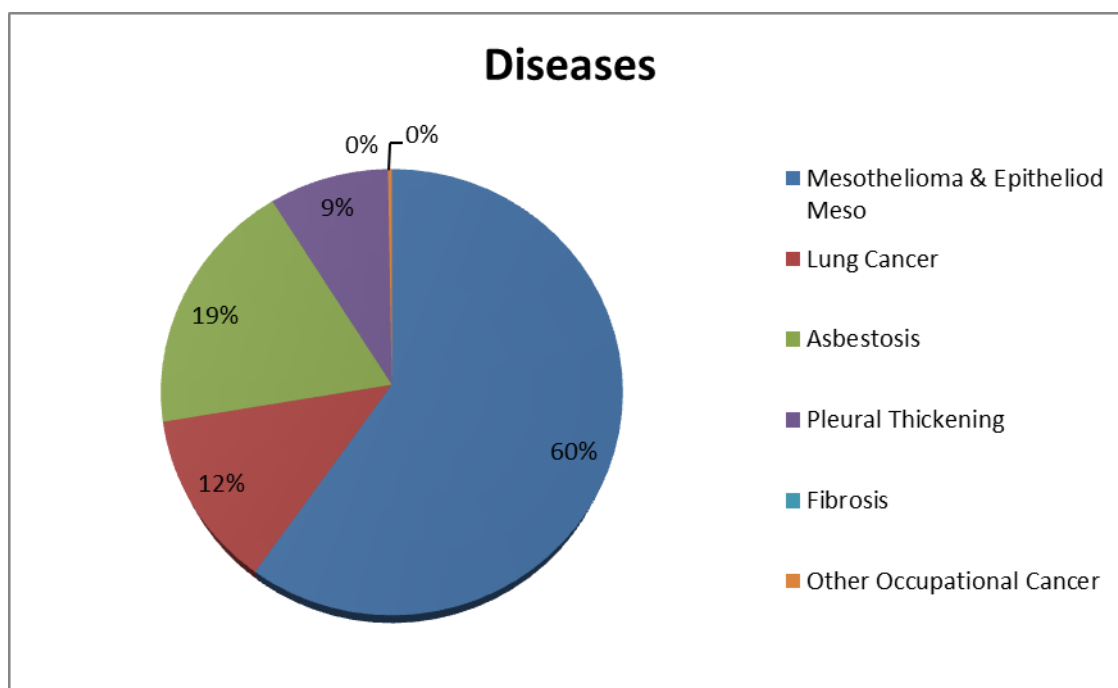
Clients who are affected by the following Asbestos related conditions may be able to claim Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefits:

D1 - Asbestosis

D3 - Mesothelioma

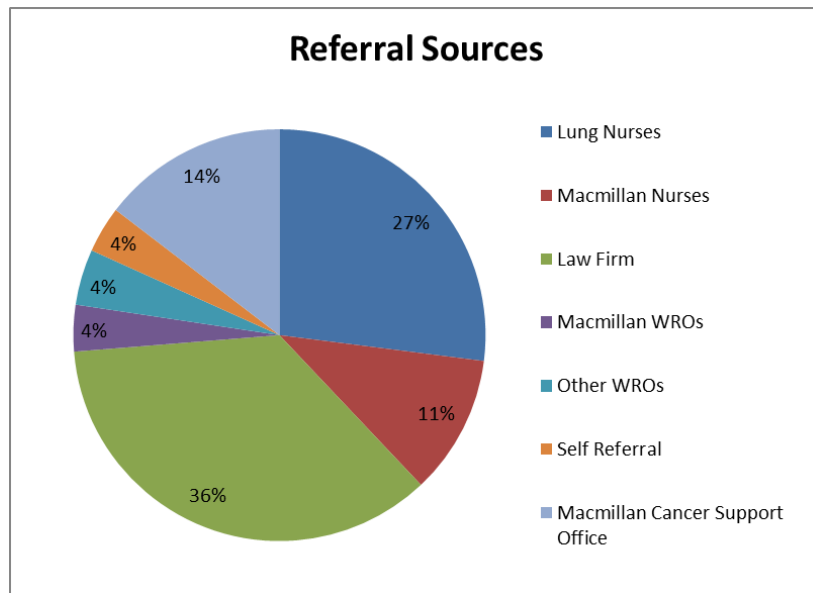
D8 & D8A - Lung Cancer caused by Asbestos Exposure

D9 - Pleural Thickening



We continue to see many clients diagnosed with all of the above conditions, which were meant to peak over recent years yet the numbers seem to rise every year. Many of our clients were exposed to Asbestos through traditional industries such as shipbuilding, chemical industries etc, but there are many diagnosed through contact with those working with asbestos and still many who have no idea how they were exposed to Asbestos. Generally the majority of our clients are over retirement age but we do occasionally come across people in their 40's with the above conditions.

The Northern TUC Asbestos Support and Campaign Group became part of the National Asbestos Forum and our advisor now meets four times a year with other Industrial Injuries Specialist Advisors throughout Great Britain to promote our service, keep up to date with relevant changes and campaign against issues facing those affected by Asbestos related conditions. We attend the Mesothelioma Action Day every year in July. We also promote our service and visit lung nurses and Macmillan Cancer Information Centres throughout the region we cover.



When we initially visit a client we carry out a full benefit check, complete any benefit applications that the clients are happy to apply for and then keep in touch with the clients. We also set time aside to contact our clients after we have seen them to ensure all applications have been awarded, to make sure that the clients are not confused, and to check on the impact on any other benefits. We also try to help their families and carers with bereavement issues.

£2,214,096.92 in reported confirmed payments and benefits was secured for our clients and their families.

Also because we are Macmillan we are able to access other services like Macmillan Grants and Macmillan Energy Advice in relevant areas. It is a privilege to be able to help those people affected by Asbestos related conditions, people who have worked so hard and now have health problems or life limiting conditions due to the work they have done in the past. We often visit people shortly after they have received their diagnosis, when their lives have been turned upside down and they have many questions and many concerns, it is good to be able to help in any way we can.

Case Study

Mr S has a diagnosis of asbestosis. He was referred to the Centre by his solicitor for a benefit check. I visited Mr and Mrs S at their home. They did not wish for a means tested benefit check but we looked at disability benefits for the couple.

Asbestosis does not automatically entitle you to an award of Industrial Injuries Benefit or the Pneumoconiosis Workers Compensation Scheme and you have to be assessed on the percentage of disability your condition has caused. Mr S's condition caused him to be slightly breathless so we completed the IIDB and the PWC forms for him. We also completed Attendance Allowance forms for Mr S as he had a number of other health problems.

During the completion of Mr S's AA form it became apparent that there were many aids and adaptations in the house which were for the benefit of his wife. Mrs S denied having any health problems when I initially spoke to her but during the visit it became clear she was having a number of difficulties caused by a recent stroke, shattered left shoulder, arthritis, dizzy spells, fainting and

hypertension. She agreed to me completing an AA application for her also and we sent both forms off with medical letters that were in the home.

Mr S was assessed at having a 30% disability under the IIDB scheme which awarded him a weekly award of £50.40 and a lump sum of £5233. He was also awarded AA at the high rate of £82.30 per week. To the surprise of the couple Mrs S was also awarded the high rate of AA, an award of £82.30 per week.

The visit, without assessing the couple for means tested benefits, led to the couple being awarded benefits with a weekly total of £215 per week as well as receiving the lump sum. This extra income will assist them with extra costs caused by their disabilities, and was awarded within 6 weeks of our visit to their home. It has had a significant and unexpected positive effect on the couple's wellbeing and peace of mind.

JULIE BOYD
MACMILLAN IIDB ADVISOR
APRIL 2018

Update on Cancer Support in the Community Project

We have been successful in securing another year's funding from Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to continue to deliver additional support services for our clients with a cancer diagnosis living in Hartlepool and Stockton.

Building on the success of the project over the past year we have continued to work in partnership with Stockton District Advice and Information Service to offer prioritised advice appointments with an advisor based in the Cancer Information Centre at North Tees Hospital and from the client's home.

In addition, we are now also offering prioritised advice appointments from two GP surgeries, McKenzie House in Hartlepool and Norton Medical Centre in Stockton. We hope by placing an advisor directly within a GP surgery that this will help to develop good working relationships with the GPs and increase the referral rates into this project and our other Macmillan funded advice services.

The Cancer Support Group continues to be well attended and those who come along often give feedback to say how much benefit they get from it. The fact that the group now meets on a weekly basis is testament to that! The group meets every Tuesday from 10:30 to 11:30am and we have a mix of men and women who come along, of varying ages, and with different cancer diagnoses. Sessions are very relaxed, filled with positivity and laughter and offer a chance to chat to others in a similar position. These are just a few of the comments we have received.

'The group is a lifeline. I enjoy coming and really appreciate being able to talk to other people about how I am feeling.'

'I'd be lost without the group. I find it hard to talk to my family about how I am feeling but when I come to the group I can be honest about that.'

'I was wary about coming to the group as I thought everyone would be morbid, sitting around talking about cancer. But I was wrong! It is such a friendly group, sometimes we talk about cancer and our treatments but most of time we just chat about anything and have a good laugh!'

The group are starting to build real friendships with each other both inside and outside of the group. We have also arranged a Christmas party and a trip to Gladys Tearoom for afternoon tea so that family members can also come along and see how the group helps.



Building on the concept of keeping active and treatment, we now run a Chair Based Exercise Council and some Feeling Fabulous sessions. Reiki Therapist, kindly gave of their time and s charge for the group. These sessions have pr a treatment really appreciated the benefits. Be received.

'The treatment was very positive, stre

'I felt a lot more relaxed after my treatment'



DAWN VINCENT
Services Development Manager
APRIL 2018

DEBT ADVICE SERVICE REPORT

Annual Debt Report 2017-18

Over the past year, the number of debt clients we have been able to assist has unfortunately reduced due to a reduction in our current funding to deliver debt advice. However, we continue to see as many clients as we can and we have evaluated the service and changed the way that we work to accommodate this. Funding to increase and maintain our services is continuously sought and we do hope that this is just a temporary measure, especially as the effect of Universal Credit is really starting to bite and the demand for debt advice is higher than ever.

We continue to deliver face to face money advice however this year we have also introduced the channel of telephone advice for an initial assessment before being allocated to a case worker. The reason that we introduced this was to be able to firstly check that we are the most appropriate service for the client and secondly to signpost the client to our drop in service if they have any urgent issues that need to be addressed prior to their debt appointment, rather than waiting 4-6 weeks on our waiting list and the clients' emergency situations becoming even more dire. This new process has proved very successful, especially as it has also reduced our rate of "did not attend" clients.

A debt drop in was introduced at Community Hub South for a period within 2017-18 however it was not utilised as well as we had hoped. It was found that the stigma of debt is still an issue and clients were not keen on attending a drop in service specifically for debt issues when others in the waiting area would know what they were here for.

During 2017-18, our debt service:

- assisted 273 clients
- handled 1072 individual debts totalling over £11,502,834.
- submitted Debt Relief Order applications for 9 clients
- assisted 1 client with a bankruptcy application
- secured debt write offs for 11 clients totalling £8360.56
- Negotiated reduced repayments for 65 debts totalling £15,187.20

Debt Case Study

A client came to the Centre as he was experiencing problems with his benefits. The client had both physical and mental health problems and was in receipt of Disability Living Allowance at the lower rates of mobility and care totalling £44.00 per week. He had received a letter telling him that his DLA was ending and he had to make a new benefit claim for Personal Independence Payment. The client's DLA award had been made many years ago.

At the same time the client had to attend for a medical assessment in respect of his Employment Support Allowance. The client had been in the Support Group which meant he did not have to do any work related activity and received £125.55 per week but following the assessment he had been placed in the Work Related Activity Group. This meant he had to attend regular appointments at the job centre, would need to participate in work preparation activities and his benefit was reduced to £102.15 per week.

The client was very distressed and anxious at the prospect of having to attend appointments and the worry was impacting on his health. The reduction in his benefit led to financial difficulties and he was in rent and Council Tax arrears and could not afford the payments in respect of his television (which was hire purchase) or his doorstep loan.

The client was able to obtain a letter from his GP which explained how his health affected him in completing day-to-day tasks and how it would impact on his health if he had to do work preparation activities. The advisor helped the client through the process of claiming PIP, however a decision would not be received for several months.

The advisor helped the client appeal his ESA decision on the basis that he should be transferred to the Support Group. The appeal was lodged but the process is lengthy and it took 6 months until the hearing. The advisor helped the client draw up a budget and contacted the client's landlord, the Council Tax department and the doorstep lender and obtained affordable payment arrangements based on the client's reduced income. The television was a huge burden on the reduced income and the client wanted to give this back to the finance company and a voluntary handback was arranged, releasing the client from further liability.

3 months later the PIP decision came through and the client was awarded the enhanced rates of both components resulting in a new weekly payment of £141.10 (an increase of £97.10 per week) and a backdated amount of £423.30. This award entitled the client to an increase of £78.35 per week on his ESA bringing it up to £180.50 per week with a backdated amount of £235.05. Three months later the client won the ESA appeal and was put back into the Support Group. The Support Group payment replaced the Work Group payment and the ESA increased by a further £7.50 per week. The decision was backdated and the client received arrears of £608.40.

At the start of the case the client was getting £146.15 in total per week. At the close of the case the client's income had increased to £329.10 per week and he no longer faced the frequent work-related job centre appointments which had been aggravating his health issues. The advisor also helped the client obtain a blue badge and to apply for the £140 warm front discount.

Behind The Scenes

The quality of our service is paramount and we have introduced a number of good practice points to ensure that our clients really are receiving the best service that they can. For example, a higher emphasis has been placed in our debt appointments on financial capability to ensure our clients have the skills they need to manage their finances moving forward.

We continue to represent our organisation at a number of meetings including NEMAG and NEDF whilst also attending the Hartlepool Financial Inclusion Partnership meetings on a regular basis and we are able to enhance the service that we offer through attending these meetings and networking with other organisations, both locally and nationally.

Looking to the future, whilst continuing to seek funding to sustain/increase services, we will also be looking at different ways of working to maximise capacity and ensure we help as many residents of Hartlepool as we can whilst also ensuring that the quality of our advice and service remains high.

Katherine Parker, Senior Debt Advice Worker

Angie Goodall, Debt Advice Worker

Peer Review Scheme

Throughout 2017-18, I continued to work as a peer reviewer for Recognising Excellence, assessing the quality of debt advice nationally. This role is funded by the Money Advice Service and brings much needed funds into the organisation.

My role as a peer reviewer is to assess clients' files against an agreed set of criteria to ensure that the clients have been advised accurately, comprehensively and in a timely manner. The

scheme is not based on outcomes but rather on the debt advice process. I identify any areas where the organisation being reviewed, and the advisors within them, can develop and will support them in exploring the actions required to make the changes.

The scheme highlights areas of good and best practice which are shared across the sector to improve the quality of debt advice nationally. Each of the organisations that I review will partake in a feedback meeting, either via Skype or Conference call, and we are able to discuss any issues that have arisen and negotiate the best way to tackle those issues.

Towards the end of 2017-18, I was offered the role of a senior peer reviewer which involves not only assessing organisations but also reviewing other peer reviewer's reports to ensure that they are accurate, that the tone is appropriate and to ensure that all peer reviewers partaking in the scheme are working consistently. I am looking forward to this new challenge and all that I will learn from it.

Katherine Parker
Peer Reviewer

GENERAL ADVICE – Outreach, Drop-in and Home Visits

West View Advice & Resource Centre continues to offer advice across Hartlepool at various locations allowing increased accessibility to the service for all residents. The services that are available at our base in West View are mirrored across the other community hubs in Hartlepool ensuring a fair service to all.

Drop in advice sessions are available five days per week at the North (Mondays/Fridays), Central (Thursdays) and South (Wednesdays) Community Hubs as well as at Kilmarnock Road Children & Young Peoples Centre (Tuesdays).

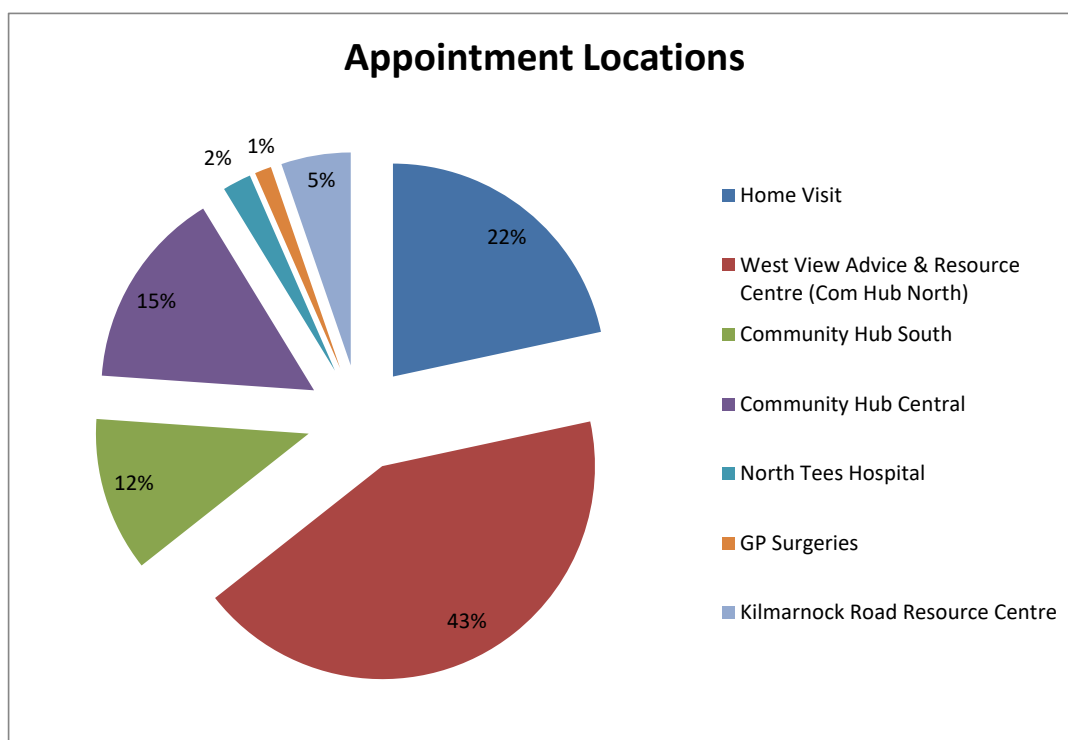
These sessions allow residents to receive up to 20 minutes initial advice on any issues they may have. For example, we can complete a benefit check in this time, make telephone calls to resolve simple issues for clients, lodge mandatory reconsiderations or appeals. More complex enquiries do require an appointment.

For anyone who requires assistance with completing a form, they are able to access our form filling drop in sessions which are available three days per week with one drop in session being held at each community hub. Appointments are also available for form filling on a daily basis. Our appointments are at a premium and we are consistently booked two weeks ahead. The drop in sessions are therefore ideal for clients who are unable to wait due to having an emergency or have a deadline to meet in the returning of their forms.

For residents who are housebound, we offer a home visit service where our advisors will attend their home and assist them with any forms and provide them with any advice they may require.

This year over 7000 appointments were used of which 1212 were delivered at the client's home. Overall the service assisted over 5000 individuals.

- Total confirmed as gained in benefit income (regular ongoing payments) **£3,561,072.32**
- Total gained through one off payments (grants, compensation and arrears, etc) **£2,720,751.57**
- Total projected gains (applied for but not yet confirmed as awarded) **£12,756,529.93**



Case Study Welfare benefits

Mr L attended the Centre with a letter from NHS Dental Charges asking for information about his Employment Support Allowance and whether it was income related or contribution based. I looked at Mr L's ESA benefit award letter and noted that he was only receiving contribution based (not income related) benefit. Due to this he should have paid for dental treatment. This meant that he could be fined and required to pay the costs of the dental treatment he had received.

After looking at Mr L's income I established that he should in fact have been receiving income related benefit as a top up, as he gets Personal Independence Payment's daily living component and before his PIP award he had been entitled to high rate care on Disability Living Allowance.

When someone who lives alone with no carer receives a qualifying disability benefit they are also entitled to severe disability premiums and an enhanced disability premium on their Employment Support Allowance.

Mr L had been an Incapacity Benefit claimant before he crossed over to Employment Support Allowance in July 2012. As Incapacity Benefit was a contribution based benefit the Department of Work and Pensions should have assessed him for income related benefit when he changed to ESA but this hadn't happened.

Due to the error of not assessing Mr L for income related benefit he was entitled to request that any income related benefit entitlement be backdated to the date his ESA started in 2012.

As Mr L is entitled to an income related benefit he will not need to pay the dental charge or be liable to a fine.

In Mr L's first appointment we contacted Dental Charges and explained that Mr L is entitled to income related benefit and he would be seeking this. We were told that Mr L had an amount of £58 to pay for his dental treatment, so we requested to do an income and expenditure statement based on Mr L's present income and outgoings and this puts the charge on hold until we have dealt with what is owed on his Employment Support Allowance.

I also contacted Claims Maintenance for Employment Support Allowance who agreed on Mr L's entitlement to income related benefit and they sent an ESA3 form to him to be returned to gain back the money owed.

We calculated that Mr L was entitled to a backdated sum from Employment Support Allowance totalling £21922.

A week later Mr L came back with the ESA3 form and an income and expenditure form to complete regarding the dental charges. We completed both forms and Mr L sent them by recorded delivery.

After 10 days Mr L came back to check that Employment Support Allowance had received the ESA3 form. I contacted Claims Maintenance again and was told the form had been received but that due to the length of requested backdate it had to be sent to another office to deal with. Claims Maintenance advised that Mr L would receive the increase in benefit from that date of the ESA3 claim but the arrears would only be sent to him once dealt with by another department.

Mr L now has an income gain of £78.35 a week.

Once the income related Employment Support Allowance is backdated we can then gain back any money paid to dental charges as the charge will be removed.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

West View Advice & Resource Centre is a charity and relies on funding to make a difference to the lives of individuals, families and communities.

We thank the following for their support during 2017/18:

Hartlepool Borough Council, Macmillan Cancer Support, Catalyst, CCG, Henry Smith Charity, 1989 Willan Trust, Trusthouse Foundation, Sir James Knott Trust, Hadrian Trust and Northern TUC Asbestos Campaign and Support Group.

ORGANISATIONAL DETAILS.

FULL POSTAL ADDRESS West View Advice and Resource Centre Limited
The Community Centre, Miers Avenue
Hartlepool, TS24 9JQ

COMPANY NUMBER. 2994776

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER. 1084632

TELEPHONE NUMBER. 01429 271275

APPOINTMENTS LINE 01429 271294

FAX NUMBER. 01429 423007

E-MAIL Reception@wvarc30.org.uk

WEBSITE ADDRESS <http://www.wvarc30.org.uk>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Mr D Wise	Chairperson
Cllr C Simmons	Treasurer
Mrs J Shaw	Director
Cllr S Griffin	Director
Cllr R Cook	Director

CENTRE MANAGER & SECRETARY Mrs Valerie A Evens

STAFF MEMBERS DURING 2017/2018

Alison Thompson	Senior Macmillan Advice Worker
Katherine Parker	Senior Debt Advice Worker
Julie Boyd	Macmillan Industrial Injuries Benefits Advice Worker
Clair Gilbraith	General Advice Worker
Jodie Hind	Senior Administrator
Denise Gilhespy	Administrator
Lou Gordon	Cleaner
Lindsay McGregor	Projects Support Worker
Michaela Smith	Administrator
Audrey Wallace	First Stage Advice Worker (Left Oct 17)
Sarah Stanley	Macmillan Energy Advice Worker
Dawn Vincent	Services Development Manager
Jaxon Bartley	Modern Apprentice – Admin
Robert Haley	First Stage Advice Worker
Tracey Cartwright	First Stage Advice Worker
Robert Easton	IIDB Advice Worker (Jul 17 – Mar 18)

ANNUAL REVIEW OF ADVICE

Annual Review of Input Audit April 2017– March 2018

	Apr	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
No Case Files Reviewed	12	0	12	0	32	21	36	5	38	12	43	0
No CAR's Issued	1	0	1	0	14	7	9	0	8	1	2	1
No. CAR's Completed	1	0	1	0	14	7	9	0	8	1	2	1
Common Theme	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

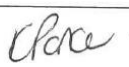
Total Files Reviewed	211
Corrective Actions Issued	44
Corrective Actions Completed	44
Common Theme for Corrective Action	0

Annual Review Carried out on 13/04/2018	Signed		Katherine Parker Senior Debt Advice Worker
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Annual Review of Internal Audit (Debt) April 2017 – March 2018

	Apr	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
No Case Files Reviewed	2	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	4	0
No CAR's Issued	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
No. CAR's Completed	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
Common Theme									Outcomes			


Total Files Reviewed	18
Corrective Actions Issued	5
Corrective Actions Completed	5
Common Theme for Corrective Action	None

Annual Review Carried out on 09/04/2018	Signed		Katherine Parker Senior Debt Advice Worker
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Annual Review of Internal Audit (Energy) April 2017 – March 2018

	Apr	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
No Case Files Reviewed	0	4	0	3	0	4	0	4	0	0	4	4
No CAR's Issued	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	1
No. CAR's Completed	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	1
Common Theme								Outcomes				

Total Files Reviewed	23
Corrective Actions Issued	6
Corrective Actions Completed	6
Common Theme for Corrective Action	None

Annual Review Carried out on 09/04/2018	Signed		Katherine Parker Senior Debt Advice Worker
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Client Satisfaction Survey Results

Customer Service in Summary

When asked how long was the wait from requesting the appointment to your actual appointment date?
52% said they were seen in less than 1 - 2 weeks.

99.3% clients said our reception staff were friendly and welcoming.

On average clients rated the advice they received as **9.8** out of a scale of **10**.

We asked the clients how they felt about their general well-being, prior to receiving advice and support on average 16.5% reported their general well-being as **Very Good**, however after receiving advice and support **45%** reported their general well-being as **Very Good**.

When asked how has this advice/support helped our clients reported:

- 44% Income likely to improve
- 68% Feel happier
- 41% Worry less about money
- 42% Feel more able to cope
- ❖ *'It felt as though you could talk over things and weren't hurried, felt relaxed and listened to.'*
- ❖ *'I praise the advisors for their help. If it weren't for them helping people they would have nowhere else to go for help.'*
- ❖ *'I cannot put into words the quality of service Alison and her colleagues have given to myself & my husband and would like to say how much we appreciate all that they have done to make our lives easier.'*
- ❖ *'We feel we have a contact for help and no longer isolated from support, if needed.'*
- ❖ *'Waiting lists for home visits are too long. Would be better if could book appointments in advance - currently restricted to 2 weeks. Fab service for family support workers from HBC.'*
- ❖ *'Excellent and extremely helpful advice/help'*
- ❖ *'The help and advice helped me a lot and took the pressure off me. Thank you'*



Serving the Community

Produced In-house by V Evens April 2018