

WAVES

Since its official opening in January 2010 WAVES has firmly established itself as a recognised, respected and essential project in supporting and offering opportunities to over 50's. WAVES now averages contact with over 200 people per month, has dealt with an increasing range of issues and problems, has dealt with amazing demand around IT access and dental needs, has an increasing number of very skilled and supportive volunteers, run many theme weeks on specific relevant issues, contributed to Older Person's Day and is working closely with a greatly increased number of partners.

IT Instruction

An amazing demand for very basic small, informal IT classes has been met by WAVES running six week courses. At present over 20 people are on a waiting list, with two courses planned for the New Year and a possible third in partnership with the Generations Together project. (see funding).

Volunteers and Work Placements

WAVES now has a base of over 10 volunteers who support and contribute to WAVES activities. We have also been able to offer work placements and Achievement Training opportunities.

Funding

WAVES receives finding from its contract and through donations from trusts, charities and businesses, including £5000 from Caretime Services Ltd.

The donation from Caretime has enabled our staff to do additional training with cover for the shop. This has helped our staff to have a fuller understanding of the way in which the different services available to our clients work. The breakdown below shows how the donation has been used up to 1st December 2010.

Donation 1st July 2010 £5000.00

	£	
Training	389.00	– All Waves Staff & Volunteers
Cover	556.00	– For Training
Out of Hours Service	315.00	– Work done out of shop hours
Consultation Time	<u>1047.00</u>	– Paid to staff for extra hours
Total	<u>2307.00</u>	
Balance Remaining	2693.00	

Case Histories

The following case histories give a human side to the use of these monies and are very pertinent examples of the need for additional funding for ongoing training around benefits, finance and legal rights and for additional staff hours to deal with particularly complex and difficult cases that require a great deal of input and contact with various agencies.

Case A (Mr and Mrs W)

Elderly couple came into WAVES in great distress due to problems with attendance allowance. Mr W had been very ill, been in hospital and respite care and was now being cared for full-time by his wife – he has substantial residual physical, sensory and memory problems.

Mrs W had informed the Pension Service of his hospitalisation dates (after 28 days, Attendance Allowance is stopped until discharge).

He eventually went home after a period of three months and again the Pension Service were informed of this. Mr W's Attendance Allowance was not stopped when it should have been but on his return home it was stopped and despite letters and phone calls by Mrs W and her daughter it was not reinstated. Despite trying to contact other agencies Mr W was still not receiving any Attendance Allowance after a period of eight months. Mrs W was still caring full-time without any support and was depressed, tearful and unable to cope for much longer.

After many hours spent with Mr and Mrs W, numerous long phone-calls and contacting other agencies, the following was eventually achieved;

- 1) Attendance Allowance for Mr W was reinstated
- 2) Back payment of £1,000 was sent to Mr W
- 3) Carers assessment was carried out
- 4) Mr W is now attending Day Centre x 2 per week to give Mrs W a break

Mr and Mrs W remain in contact with WAVES, popping in for a chat and have bought card, chocolates and Xmas present for staff and volunteers.

NOTE: When contacting agencies such as Pension Service and Attendance Allowance Department on behalf of a client, a security process has to be conducted over the phone by the client in order for him to give permission for someone to act on his behalf. Numerous questions are asked – very difficult for people with hearing and memory problems – no prompting is allowed!

Case B (Mr G)

Mr G came to WAVES as a last resort having tried accessing help from other services. His wife had recently died and he had a loan from the Social Fund to pay for the funeral. He had a letter from the Social Fund (based in Bristol) requesting various information and letters to enable payment of the funeral costs.

One such item was a letter confirming that he was now, on the death of his wife, entitled to receive Housing + Council Tax Benefit in his own right. He had not received this despite enquiries, nor had he been reassessed as regards his benefit rights. The letter from the Social Fund requested this information by a certain date otherwise the “case would be closed” (this gave a time period of less than two weeks to sort out the issues regarding benefits). This date had just passed. Mr G was at a loss of how to proceed – he admitted poor literacy skills – and was obviously depressed and still in stock. The following actions were taken on his behalf;

- 1) Immediate contact with Social Fund to keep case open
- 2) Communication with Plymouth City Council’s Contact Centre to access an emergency benefit reassessment for Mr G
- 3) Admin and photocopying procedures

Good relationships with the Contact Centre and WAVES resulted in identifying that mistakes had been made and Mr G’s case had fallen through the net.

A benefit assessment was done via the computer and by the next week Mr G had documentation regarding his new benefit entitlements.

- 4) Mr G bought all relevant paperwork to WAVES to be checked and sent to the Social Fund
- 5) Advice on housing issues

Mr G returned to WAVES when situation was finally settled to say thank-you. Very relieved to have settled this emotive problem.

Case C (Mr J)

Mr J has various health problems, uses an electric wheelchair and cares for his wife who also has multiple health issues and has a wheelchair. Mr J is a regular visitor to WAVES and has a long standing, difficult relationship with both health and social care services resulting in various complaint procedures and at times abusive interchanges.

WAVES has offered support, social contact, help with debt concerns and other issues and has acted as a conduit and communicator between Mr J, his wife and Social Services.