

## DAS Serving the Disabled of Felixstowe

### Key Headlines

Your grant meant that we were able to continue to provide the means for the disabled children and adults and their carers in the Felixstowe area to achieve justice within a welfare system that is stacked against them. People with physical and mental health issues are at a clear disadvantage in life generally and particularly when it comes to tackling the form-filling, assessment and other legal procedures they have to face. The ££benefits they gain can provide many more opportunities for them to live slightly more comfortable lives in difficult circumstances.

Throughout 2021 we achieved a 100% success record in supporting clients with appeals against DWP assessments; this is a second year in a row at 100% and is a proud achievement.

In our crisis intervention service the numbers coming or being referred to us was even higher in 2021 than the five-fold increase we saw in 2020. This was, of course, a result of the pandemic with its widely reported disproportionately negative impact on the disabled.

Being a Disabled People's Organisation with two-thirds of us ourselves living with a disability we give preference to disabled job applicants and provide opportunities for disabled and other volunteers to do something worthwhile and rewarding in their lives. Last year we were able to recruit another 8 bringing our total volunteer team to 18. Amongst other things, this has enabled us to repopulate our Listening Service - our proactive outbound calling service - through which we keep in touch with clients we haven't heard from for a while and find out if other needs have arisen. Frequently they have so they are referred to an adviser or we signpost them to another agency we know can help. Clients love it!

### How has your grant improved the lives of our beneficiaries?

Any client whose financial situation has been improved through our work is obviously better off and that alone lifts depression and worry to a greater or lesser extent. But almost as important is the compassionate, empathetic and non-judgmental approach taken by our staff and volunteers, many of whom have been in their client's position. It has a significant uplifting effect just knowing there is someone out there who really cares.

### Were there any challenges during the period of this grant and how did you resolve them?

Of course, every charity like every business and organisation has faced challenges over the past year or two. In the face of considerable adversity at times, for our people and our clients, we achieved a great deal. As a trustee, I can honestly say our manager Jo Bowen and her team continue to amaze me with their hard work, enthusiasm and dedication. However, here is an example where something didn't go according to plan and what we learned from it. We took much longer than we imagined to recruit to two senior paid vacancies in the Spring and eventually we employed a recruitment agency (at unbudgeted expense). This delayed some developments. We eventually got in two truly amazing people but in future we won't leave it as long to consider using an expert recruiter.

**Rod Gibson/Secretary**

**March 2022**

Felixstowe beneficiaries in 2021:

Clients advised	Enquiries handled	Benefits gained*
<b>181</b>	<b>1,407</b>	<b>£501,363</b>

\* In year 1 - most benefits extend for an average of three years.