

**Age UK Teesside**

**Press release**

**October 2015**

## **£millions lost in benefits for older Teessiders**

Older people in Teesside could be missing out on £millions in benefits, says a leading charity.

Age UK Teesside last year succeeded in claiming over £2.5 million in annual benefits for the 2,758 people who were referred to its Information & Advice Service in Stockton, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool.

Chief Executive Anne Sykes said: “Many older people either don’t know about the benefits which are available to them or are too proud to claim, but it’s their right to get the financial support they need.

“The fact that the team was able to claim such a high figure in 12 months suggests that there are many others who are missing out.”

Age UK Teesside’s Information & Advice Team works in partnership with Middlesbrough Citizens Advice Bureau, Middlesbrough Council, Middlesbrough Environment City, Stockton Citizens Advice Bureau, Stockton Borough Council and Hartlepool Borough Council.

The free service includes form filling for welfare benefits, referrals to Social Services, assistance with accessing aids and adaptations, advice on the Warm Homes Discount, energy advice and information on grants, and help with appeals against refused benefits claims.

Food vouchers and referrals to community support schemes are also available for those in immediate need and some clients are referred on for additional help such as debt advice.

In addition to the £2,528,479 annualised benefits won between April 2014 and March 2015, the service also helped claim £166,803 in backdated payments for clients.

A survey of people given support showed that 90% rated the service as excellent.

The service operates from office locations in all three boroughs and also offers outreach support. Call 01642 805500 for more information.

**Ends**

**Further information from Anne Sykes at Age UK Teesside. Telephone 01642 805500.**