

AGE UK ISLE OF WIGHT

INFORMATION & ADVICE STATEMENT OF SERVICE

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Age UK Isle of Wight provides Information and Advice (I&A) on a range of issues relating to people aged 50 and over and those who care for and support them.

OUR I&A SERVICE CAN HELP WITH:

Welfare benefits - Advice for those over retirement age, including checking benefit entitlements and assistance with completing claim forms.

Care and Support Services - Helping people identify and navigate care and support services appropriate for their needs. How and when to access Adult Social Care to request a Care Needs Assessment and paying for care and support.

Housing – Advice on housing issues such as maintaining a property, adaptations and housing options available to older persons who may need more support or want to move nearer to family.

Money problems – helping those who are struggling to make ends meet or pay their bills.

Local services – Information on social groups, leisure and social activities, tradespeople and local transport.

OUR SERVICE INCLUDES:

Information guides and factsheets - on a wide range of subjects that affect older people and those who care for and support them.

Telephone advice – Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm. Call us on 01983 525282. Someone will take your details and arrange for one of the team to call you back. We aim to respond within 5 working days. If you call outside of these hours you will be given the option to call Age UK National Advice Line. They will either help you with your query or arrange for someone from Age UK Isle of Wight to call you back within 5 working days.

Office appointments – Currently only undertaken in exceptional circumstances due to Covid restrictions and limited staff attendance at our office.

Home Visits – We will visit older people in their homes where it would be difficult to provide our service. For example if someone has communication issues. However, home visits are more expensive and time consuming so there is often more of a waiting list for this service. All staff or volunteers from Age UK Isle of Wight will carry identification on home visits. If you have concerns about someone turning up at your door claiming to be from Age UK Isle of Wight you can call our office on 01983 525282 and we can then confirm if they are from Age UK Isle of Wight and if they have an appointment with you.

SERVICES WE ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE:

Sometimes people come to us with issues that we are not regulated to deal with or have the expertise or knowledge to do so. We are unable to provide help with consumer debt, financial, immigration or legal advice. In these cases we would provide basic information and direct you to other organisations that would be able to help you.

We would either signpost or refer you to them. Signposting is providing you with the information you need to make contact with another organisation and referring is contacting them on your behalf. We will always seek your consent before referring to another organisation.

There may be times when we are unable to advise or help you further as we do not have the expertise or resources available to pursue your case anymore. For instance if you challenge a welfare benefit decision, we are unable to help with the appeals process but would try and direct you to someone who could.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM US

Our service is

Free – any information or advice we provide is free of charge. Whilst it is free of charge we are grateful for any donations received as this helps us to continue to provide and maintain this service.

Independent – All information and advice provided is independent and we would never knowingly recommend a service or provider to you including Age UK's own services. We will always where possible, provide you with a choice of alternatives to help you make an informed decision. We will never advise a client to take any action that is illegal or fraudulent. We will immediately stop advising a client if they pursue an illegal or fraudulent action and may inform the appropriate authorities.

Confidential – All information we keep about you is stored securely and only viewed by staff and volunteers involved with advising you, or third parties that you have allowed us to share the information with. We will not discuss your case with anyone outside of our service without your consent unless they have been granted responsibility to act on your behalf by The Court of Protection or Department for Work and Pensions. We will always seek your consent before sharing your information with other parties. Examples of third parties that your information may be shared with, following your consent are external organisations such as DWP or the local authority.

The following circumstances may warrant us sharing your information without consent these are:

If a client insists on taking an illegal or fraudulent course of action.

If we are contacted by a statutory body about a client we have advised and they are suspected of taking an illegal or fraudulent action and are under investigation.

If we are concerned that an individual is at risk of serious harm. In such cases we may notify a relevant statutory body of our concern, for example Adult Social Care or the Police. Such disclosures would be carried out following the agreed safeguarding procedure that our staff and volunteers are trained in.

Respect – We will always treat people accessing our service with respect and expect they will treat our staff and volunteers the same way. We will not judge or discriminate against anyone accessing our service on the grounds of age, disability, gender, sexuality, race or religion. We will not judge anyone accessing our service based upon their circumstances and will not seek to influence the decisions they make. We aim to provide enough information and advice to enable them to make an informed choice.