Statement of Services for Information and Advice

Age UK North Cumbria provides information and advice on a range of issues relating to older people and those who care for them. We specialise in the following topics for those over 50 years of age:

- Benefits and Money – maximising income through benefit entitlement checks, aiding with the completion of claim forms, and challenging decisions (where we have supported with the application).
- Social Care - identifying the type of care and support that a Client may need and what statutory and non- statutory services are available to meet these. Providing information on how to access them and their respective eligibility criteria.
- Housing Options – advice on the different types of housing available, how to access repairs, aids, and adaptations.
- Local Services - advising on the support, groups, activities, and concessions available locally.

*Please note, Clients may be denied this service in the following circumstances: Where a conflict of interest arises, or the Client's own behaviour means that Age UK North Cumbria needs to consider removing the right to the service. This will always be discussed with the Deputy CEO and the Chief Executive Officer, prior to any action being taken.

How do we provide help?

- Information guides and factsheets are available, covering a wide variety of topics affecting older people and those who care for them.
- Predominantly support is being provided via the Telephone. Please call us on 01228 536673, Monday to Friday between 9am and 4.30pm. This call will be charged at a local rate. If you contact us and the phone line is busy, a message can be left, and your call will be returned as soon as possible.
- Where Client's needs dictate, a home visit can be arranged, following the completion of a telephone risk assessment and prior agreement from the Information and Advice Team Manager.
- Face to Face Drop-in Sessions will be held as follows-

First and Third Tuesday between 10am and 2pm at The Resource Centre, Sandgate, Penrith, CA11 7TP

Second and Fourth Tuesday of the Month between 10am and 2pm at The Riverside Building, 3 Chapel St, Appleby-in-Westmorland CA16 6QR

Wednesdays between 10am and 2pm at 66 Lowther Street, Carlisle, CA3 8DP.

Thursdays between 10am and 2pm at Cumbria House, Workington, CA14 2AD.

Outreach sessions will also be available throughout the districts, and these will be advertised, via social media. Requests for these will be assessed in terms of demand and capacity of the team.

Change in service
Clients and local partners will be notified as soon as practicable if there are any changes to this service, including our opening hours, whether short or long term.

What will happen if we can't provide the service you require?
Sometimes people come to us, or we identify problems that we do not have the expertise or knowledge to help with. For example, we are unable to provide debt, financial or immigration advice. In these cases, we can provide you with basic information and direct you to another Organisation for further help. Where possible we will give you a selection of Organisations to choose from and we will either signpost or refer you to them.

How our service treats its clients
We follow five key principles when delivering our service.

The service is provided free of charge
You won't be charged for any of our Information and Advice. If we signpost or refer you onto another Organisation, we will tell you if there is any charge for their service. While we provide help free of charge, running the Information and Advice Service is expensive and only some of the money to do this comes from external funding. Any donation you can make will always be greatly appreciated.

The information and advice we provide is independent of any outside influence
We will never recommend a service or provider to you, including Age UK's own services. Where possible we will always provide you with a choice of alternatives and help you make an informed decision. We're not bound by local or national government policies. We will never advise someone to do anything illegal or fraudulent. We will immediately stop advising anyone carrying out illegal or fraudulent actions and may notify the appropriate authorities.

All information is confidential
Any information we keep about you is stored securely and only viewed by Employees and Volunteers involved in advising you or other people that you have allowed us to share this information with. These may be external auditors that check the quality and accuracy of our work, Organisations we are referring your case on to, and any agencies we are dealing with on your behalf (such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or an energy supplier). We won't share your information or discuss your case with anyone outside of our service without your direct consent unless they have been given

responsibility to act on your behalf and evidence of this will be required. You have the right to view any data we hold on you and also to withdraw your consent at any point by contacting 01228 536673.

We may share information about someone without their consent if:

- they insist on taking an illegal or fraudulent course of action
- we are contacted by a statutory body about a Client who is being investigated for suspected illegal or fraudulent activity
- we are concerned that someone involved in a case is at risk of abuse or harm or there is a possibility of abuse or harm to others. In this case we may notify a relevant statutory body, for example social services or the police. These disclosures will be undertaken following Age UK North Cumbria's Safeguarding and Confidentiality Policies (copies available by request from 01228 536673) and discussed with the Deputy CEO, who acts as the Safeguarding Lead.

Any data we hold about you is processed in accordance with Data Protection Legislation and Age UK North Cumbria's GDPR Data Protection Policy. A copy of our Policy and Privacy notice can be requested by calling 01228 536673.

Clients are treated with fairness, dignity and respect and we expect clients to treat our staff and volunteers in the same way

We won't judge anyone based on their age, disability, gender, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation. We won't judge anyone based upon the circumstances they find themselves in and we won't try to influence the decisions you make following our advice. Sometimes Clients will make a decision that we don't think is in their best interest. We will tell them if this happens and aim to provide enough information and advice to help them make an informed choice. We will respect whatever decision they then make. The Information and Advice Service operates in compliance with Age UK North Cumbria's Equality and Diversity Policy. A copy of the policy is available by request from 01228 536673.

Our service is as accessible as possible for older people

Our office is suitable for people with disabilities and has step free accessible interview facilities, disabled toilets, and hearing loops available on request.

Where Clients have difficulties accessing or understanding our information and advice, for example because of a disability or language issue, we will take all reasonable steps to provide our service in a manner that is accessible and appropriate to their needs or circumstances, and we will always aim to give you as much time as you need when we see you.

How to make a complaint, compliment, or suggestion about our service

If you would like to make a compliment or have a suggestion about our Information and Advice service, please contact the Information and Advice Team Manager, Annette Dalton, either in writing at 20 Spencer Street, Carlisle, CA1 1BG or by telephone on 01228 536673. If you wish to make a complaint, please follow Age UK North Cumbria's Comments/Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure. A copy of this is available from our website https://www.ageuk.org.uk/northcumbria.

What we ask of our Clients

In return for providing information and advice we expect you to:

- treat our Employees and Volunteers with courtesy and respect.
- provide us with accurate, up to date and truthful information about your Circumstances.
- attend scheduled appointments or let us know in advance if you can't, if possible
- inform us of changes in your circumstances which may be relevant to your case.
- provide us with information or paperwork that we need for your case.
- not negotiate on your own behalf or respond to information requests that relate to your case without first discussing it with us.
- notify us of the outcome of welfare benefit applications we have assisted you with

How you can help us

Our Information and Advice Team gain satisfaction from our work and the positive impact we have upon our Clients lives. We don't expect any further form of recognition or gifts. And while "thank you gifts" are lovely to receive, there are several other ways you can support us so we can continue to provide this vital service.

1. Consider donating by either cash or a cheque made payable to Age UK North Cumbria. And if you are a taxpayer, please ask us about 'gift aid'.
2. Become a Volunteer with us, we have opportunities within our Information and Advice Service, Shops and Social Engagements.
3. Donate to, or buy from, our local charity shops at Carlisle, Brampton, and Alston.
4. Tell others about our service and recommend us to your friends.
5. Provide feedback on our service to help us develop and ensure we are meeting your needs.

Review

The Deputy and Information and Advice Team Manager is responsible for monitoring adherence to this statement via day-to-day support and supervision of Employees and Volunteers.

Information and Advice Team Manager – Annette Dalton

October 2026- Version: 3

Deputy CEO – Becky Cartmell

Chief Executive - Alison Ambrose