

## **Age UK North Yorkshire Coast & Moors (NYCM)**

### **Information & Advice (I&A) Service, Statement of Service**

The statement below will be included on the Age UK NYCM website I&A page. A notice showing the statement is pinned to the wall in all reception areas, clearly stating that it is available as a printed or electronic document on request from an existing or potential client. A copy of this statement will also be issued to all clients receiving ongoing casework support.

The statement is reviewed at least every six months and is updated if there are any changes to the nature of the service (i.e. a change to opening hours). Once updated, the new version will replace the previous document:

- On the Age UK NYCM website
- In the I&A shared drive
- On the reception wall

### **Information about Age UK NYCM's I&A Service for its customers**

#### **What services do we offer?**

Age UK NYCM provides information and advice on a range of issues relating to the over 50s and those who care for and support them. In particular, we specialise in:

- welfare benefits advice for those over the age of 50, including working out benefit entitlements and offering assistance to complete claim forms
- helping people identify the care and support they need, including help accessing Social Care and advice on how to pay for care and support
- advising on housing issues, including help with maintaining a property and advice on the different types of housing for older people who need more support or want to move nearer to family or friends
- advising on the services, support, groups, activities and concessions available locally.
- advising those who are finding it hard to make ends meet or are struggling to pay their bills, including energy bills
- helping people to make complaints or challenge decisions about welfare benefits, social services, health services and energy providers.

#### **How do we provide help?**

- **Information guides and factsheets.** These cover a wide range of subjects affecting the over 50s and those who care for and support them.

- **Initial phone contact:** Call us on 01723 379058 from Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm. Your details will be taken (with your consent) and a brief outline of your query. If you require an in-depth appointment, you will be put on our waiting list. If you ring outside of opening hours or our lines are busy, you will be able to leave a message.  
You could always pop into the Scarborough office, in addition to the above.
- **Drop ins:** Initial contact can also be made through our drop-in sessions. These are held daily across our area:
  - Monday** 10.30 to 12 noon – Scarborough Office
  - Tuesday** 10.00 to 12 noon – Filey Age UK shop
  - Wednesday** 10.00 to 12 noon – Scarborough Office
  - Thursday** 10.00 to 12 noon – Pickering Library
  - Friday** 10.00 to 12 noon – Whitby Library
- **Telephone advice, office appointments and home visits:** These are booked in advance after you have been referred in by another Organisation or contacted us as above.

### **What will happen if we can't provide the service you require?**

Sometimes people come to us with problems that we do not have the expertise or knowledge to help with. For example, we are unable to provide consumer, debt advice, financial advice 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.

When signposting, we will give you the organisation's contact information so you can contact them yourself. When referring, we will contact the organisation on your behalf, arrange an appointment and provide them with copies of any documents already completed by our service. We will always get your permission before referring you to another organisation.

Sometimes when advising you we will reach a point where we do not have the expertise to pursue your case any further. This most commonly happens when there is a need to challenge a welfare benefit decision. We will refer you to another local advice service that can help you if this happens.

### **How our service treats its clients**

We follow five key principles when delivering our service:

- 1) The service is provided free of charge**

You will not be charged for any of our information and advice. If we signpost or refer you to another organisation, we will tell you if there is any charge for their service. While we provide help free of charge, running the I&A Service is expensive and only some of the money to do this comes from external funding. Any donation you can make will be greatly appreciated.

**2) 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 are not bound by local or national government policies and will always advise you on what's best for you rather than what's best for the Council, the Department for Work and Pensions, Age UK or any other organisation. 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.

**3) All information is confidential**

Any information we keep about you is stored securely and only viewed by staff 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 agencies we are dealing with on your behalf (such as the DWP or an energy supplier). We won't share your information or discuss your case with anyone outside of our service without your consent unless they have been given responsibility to act on your behalf by the Court of Protection or Department for Work and Pensions. You have the right to withdraw consent.

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 done following Adult Safeguarding' procedures that our staff and volunteers have been trained in.

Any data we hold about you is processed in accordance with data protection legislation and Age UK NYCM's GDPR policy. A copy of our data protection policy is available by calling 01723 379058.

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

We will not judge anyone based on their age, disability, gender, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation. We will not 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 do not 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 I&A Service operates in compliance with Age UK NYCM's Equalities and Diversity Policy. A copy of the policy is available by request on 01723 379058.

#### **5. Our service is as accessible as possible for the over 50s**

Our offices are suitable for people with disabilities. We have a lift within the building, disabled toilets, and no steps into the office. We have a ramp to enable people with mobility scooters and wheelchairs to access the office more easily. 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. The I&A Service operates in compliance with Age UK NYCM's Equalities and Diversity Policy. A copy of the policy is available by request from 01723 379058.

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

If you would like to compliment or make a suggestion about our Information & Advice service please contact the CEO, Neil Bradbury, either in writing at 39 Aberdeen Walk, Scarborough, YO11 1BD or at [neil.bradbury@ageuknycm.org.uk](mailto:neil.bradbury@ageuknycm.org.uk) or by telephone on 01723 379058.

If you wish to make a complaint, please follow Age UK NYCM's complaints procedure, a copy of the full complaint procedure is available on request from 01723 379058.

#### **What we ask of our clients**

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

- treat our staff and other clients with courtesy and respect
- provide us with accurate and truthful information about your circumstances
- attend appointments or let us know in advance if you cannot
- 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.



39 Aberdeen Walk, Scarborough, YO11 1BD  
Registered Charity Number: 1143893  
Telephone Number: 01723 379058  
E-mail: sarah.peaker@ageuknycm.org.uk

### **How you can help us**

- Make a donation – please make it clear when you make your donation if you wish to donate specifically to the Information & Advice service.
- Volunteer – please see our website or contact us on 01723 379058 to discover our volunteering opportunities.
- Provide a case study of your experience of our Information & Advice service and the difference it has made to you – please let your worker know if you are happy to do this
- Campaign for us by writing to your councillor or MP to tell them how helpful you found us. From time to time we run local and national campaigns. If you would like to support us in our campaigning work please let your advisor know.
- Donate to, or buy from, our charity shop(s): We have charity shops in Eastfield, Filey and on Falsgrave Road, Scarborough.

**Agreed:** October 2023

**Review due:** October 2024

**Signed off by:** Sarah Peaker, I&A manager