



# **Information and Advice Statement of Service**

## Who the Information & Advice Service is for

Age UK Somerset can respond to queries from people over 50 or anyone enquiring on their behalf. This includes friends, family members, carers and professionals.

## How to access our service

The Information & Advice Service is available **Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm**.

We are closed on Bank Holidays, and occasionally for staff training, when you will be able to leave a message.

By phone: call our Information & Advice line on **01823 345 613**

If our I&A line is busy you will reach our Voicemail answerphone service, where you will be asked to leave:

- Your Name
- Your telephone number with dialling code
- And to please leave a short message, so that we can call you back.

### ***Please note:***

*While our offices are closed and we are working remotely during the coronavirus pandemic all enquiries are being directed and responded to through the voicemail service.*

By email: **infoandadvice@ageuksomerset.org.uk**

By post to: **Age UK Somerset, Ash House, Cook Way, Taunton, Somerset, TA2 6BJ**

### ***Please note:***

*We are not currently able to offer drop in advice sessions, or appointments.*

## Areas we provide information/advice on

- **Income and welfare benefits:**  
Benefit Entitlement Checks; reducing household bills; information on accessing grants.  
We can offer home visits to help with some benefit applications.  
We specialise in benefits for people over pension age.
- **Social care:** how to access support from social services or arrange care privately; information on funding care.
- **Housing:** housing options; finding a care home; home adaptations.
- **Local services:** community groups and activities (run by us or other organisations); charities and support services; tradespeople.

## Areas we can't help with

**We are not able to give regulated advice such as Financial, Debt, Legal and Immigration advice.**

If we are not able to help or advise directly, we will always do our best to direct you to someone who can.

Although we can explain your options, we can't make decisions for you.

## What you can expect from us

Our service is:

**Free:** any help you have from our Information & Advice Service is free of charge, including our factsheets and information guides.

**Independent:** we will explain your options clearly and won't give advice which favours a particular organisation or service. We won't recommend particular traders, including those linked to Age UK or Age UK Somerset.

**Non-judgemental:** we will treat you with respect regardless of your age, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, family circumstances or life choices.

**Confidential:** all enquiries are confidential and no information is shared with third parties without consent. All data is stored securely and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. In exceptional circumstances we may need to share certain details with other organisations (e.g. adult social services if there is a safeguarding concern) without a client's consent. For more information please see our Data Protection Privacy Notice, Confidentiality Policy and Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Policy.

**Timely:** we aim to respond to all enquiries by the next working day, although this may vary in exceptionally busy periods.

## What we expect from you

In return for providing information and advice we expect our clients to:

- Treat our staff, volunteers and other clients with **courtesy and respect**.
- Provide us with **accurate information** about your circumstances.

Age UK Somerset is a local charity and does not receive any government funding.

If you are able to make a donation, it will help us continue to offer this service.

Please ask for more information, or go to the website for ways to donate:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/somerset/get-involved/donate/>