

Statement of Service

Information about Age UK West Sussex/Brighton and Hove I&A Service for its customers

What type of service do we offer:

AUKWSBH provides free confidential information and advice on a wide range of issues for people aged 50 and over, their families and carers. We will tell them about their rights and entitlements, local services and support available to them and those who care for and support them. In particular we specialise in:

- **Welfare Benefits** advice for those over 50, including benefit checks to work out if you are entitled to benefits and assisting people to complete the claim forms.
- **Money Advice** provides information and guidance that enables you to make informed decisions to enable you to take positive steps towards improving your finances including help with budgeting, and maximising income.
- **Social Care** helping people to identify care and support services appropriate to their needs, accessing Adult Services and advising on how you can pay for care and support. Assistance with planning for your future care needs.
- **Housing Assisting** people to resolve housing enquiries including accessing local authority housing, repairs and improvements and support with identifying future housing needs.
- **Local Community** advising older people on the services, support, group, activities and concessions available locally

Our service has achieved the Age UK Quality of Advice (QAA) Standard ensuring that the service meets recognised Advice Sector standards of practice and that the information and advice we give is of high quality and accurate.

Our service includes:

- **Information guides and factsheets** on a wide range of subjects affecting older people and those who care for and support them
- **Telephone advice** Monday to Friday between 9:00 and 14:00. Please call our free phone on 0800 019 1310.
- **Office appointments.** We ask that clients contact us to arrange an appointment rather than 'dropping in' so that we can ensure that you will be seen without having to wait and that we can tell you about any documentation that we would need you to bring along to the appointment. To arrange an office appointment please contact Age UK West Sussex Brighton and Hove on our Freephone 0800 019 1310 between 9:00 and 14:00
- **Home visits.** For clients with complex issues who cannot get to an outreach appoint we can provide a limited home visiting service. This service is for people that cannot access the service in any other way, through disability or hardship. This is an expensive way for

us to deliver this service and so would ask you to consider if there is anyway someone could bring you to one of our outreach services. If you would like to arrange an appointment or discuss options please call Age UK West Sussex Brighton and Hove on 0800 019 1310, or email info@ageukwsbh.org.uk

What will happen if we cannot provide the service you require?

Sometimes people will come to us with problems that we do not have the expertise or knowledge to help them with or that we do not have the appropriate licence to enable us to provide advice. We are unable to offer immigration advice because we do not hold the appropriate licences.

We can provide you with basic information on almost any issue commonly experienced by older people but if you require advice we may have to direct you to another organisation. Where possible we will give you a selection of organisations that you can choose from and we will either '[signpost](#)' or '[refer](#)' you to them.

When 'signposting' we will give you the organisation's contact information so that 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 seek your consent 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 further. This may be when challenging employment or immigration issues.

How our service treats its clients

In delivering the service we follow four key principles:

- **Free of Charge** That the service is provided free of charge. You will not be charged for any of the information and advice you receive from this service. If we signpost or refer you onto another organisation we will tell you if there is any charge for their service. While we provide the service 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 that a client can make to help us maintain our service will be greatly accepted. If you wish to donate please ask one of our staff or volunteers about 'gift aid'.
- **Independent** 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 service. We will always, where possible, provide you with a choice of alternatives and provide you with help to make an informed choice. Our service is not bound by local or national government policies and we will always seek to advise you as to what is in your best interest rather than that of the council, the Department of Work and Pensions, Age UK or any other organisation. However will not advise a client to take an action that is illegal or fraudulent. If a client insists on pursuing an illegal or fraudulent course of action we will immediately cease to advise them and may notify the appropriate authorities.
- **Confidentiality** We will treat all of your information as being confidential. Any information that we keep about you is stored securely and will only be viewed by information and advice staff and volunteers involved in advising you or third parties that you have consented to us sharing the information with. Your personal information is held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 We will not discuss your case with anyone

outside of our service without your consent or if they have been granted responsibility to act on your behalf by the Court of Protection or Department for Work and Pensions. We will seek consent from you before sharing your information with other parties. Common examples of third parties that your information may be shared with, following your consent, are external auditors from Age UK that check the quality and accuracy of our work, organisations that we are referring your case onto and agencies that we are dealing with on your behalf (for example the DWP or an energy supplier). There are three circumstances in which we may share your information without your consent. They are :

- if a client insists on taking an illegal or fraudulent course of action
- if we are contact by a statutory body about a client we have advised who is suspected of taking an illegal or fraudulent action and is being investigated
- and if we are concerned that an individual, that is involved in a case that we are advising on, is at risk of significant harm. In such cases we may notify a relevant statutory body of our concern, for example social services or the police. Such disclosures will be done following the local agreed 'No Secrets' procedures that our staff and volunteers have been trained in.

- **Respect** We will always treat our clients with respect and expect that our clients will treat our staff and volunteers in the same way. We will not judge our clients based on their age, disability, gender, sexuality, race or religion. We will not judge our clients based upon the circumstance they find themselves in and we will not seek to influence the decisions you make following our advice. Sometimes clients will make a decision that we would generally consider not to be in their best interest, we will inform them of this and aim to provide enough information and advice to help them make an informed choice. We will respect whatever decision they then make. Where clients have difficulties accessing or understanding our information and advice, for example because of a disability or language issue, we will attempt to take all reasonable steps to provide our service in manner that is appropriate to your needs or circumstances and we will always aim to give you as much time as you need when we see you.

Review: Review period 2 years. Next due 22 sept 2026