

Age UK I&A Quality Programme

Service Management Review Report

Age UK: Wiltshire

Date of Report: 16th February 2015

1. Organisation details

Age UK:	Wiltshire
I&A Manager:	John Truss
Organisation's registered address:	Cromwell House 31 Market Place Devizes Wiltshire SN10 1JG
Service Management Reviewer:	Sally Denton
Date of review:	29.01.2015

2. Organisational context

Age UK Wiltshire offers a telephone and face to face advice service from its offices in Devizes. The office is open 10am to 3pm from Monday to Thursday and 10am to midday on Friday. Home visits and office appointments are also arranged. They have also made arrangements for a Solicitor to undertake home visits and office appointments on legal matters not otherwise covered within the organisation.

Age UK Wiltshire provides advice and casework on a wide range of subjects including benefits, housing and community care, they also provide general information and signposting on financial, debt and legal issues.

3. Mystery shopping findings

Three mystery shoppers were undertaken by telephone.

The mystery shoppers identified no access issues and were able to get through very easily. Mystery shoppers provided positive feedback in relation to their treatment and indicated that they were given full responses to their queries. The mystery shoppers did not identify any concerns in relation to the service. Advisers were described as 'very helpful and thorough' 'very polite and patient' 'knowledgeable about their subject and very helpful'.

4. Specific QAA findings followed up by the reviewer

The overall score for Part 1, the QAA was:

'Met':

Overall 19 files were assessed as good, 6 as satisfactory and none as poor. The QAA assessment did not identify any major problems but did recommend that an indication of the rate expected in benefit claims for example Attendance Allowance would be helpful so that when clients are advised of the outcome it would be easy for another adviser to consider whether it would be worth challenging the decision. The organisation had already arranged and undertaken a staff meeting where the content of the QAA was discussed and this suggestion is to be implemented.

5. Summary of Service Management Review findings

'Met'

The organisation successfully meets all of the benchmarks in Part 2.

6. Overall result

Both QAA and SMR 'Met': the I&A Service is deemed to have successfully passed the programme. A certificate will be awarded, and passporting to the Advice Quality Standard can then be arranged. Certification lasts for 3 years.

7. Service Management Review Summary

Areas that were met:

The organisation has good systems in place, which are implemented consistently; staff feel well supported and are offered necessary training; staff are effectively supervised.

This support enables a high level of advice to be delivered as evidenced in the QAA report.

The organisation understands the context in which it is delivering advice, it is acutely aware of analysing the needs of clients and any of those needs that they struggle to meet.

Areas requiring further action: [specific recommendations are in section 9]:

None.

8. Detailed findings: Managing the Service

2A Enquiry and Case Management:

The service has clear and relevant systems and procedures in place to manage the delivery of consistent, good quality information and advice to clients.

Benchmark 2A.1: The service has processes that ensure consistent, clear and secure case recording and case management.

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	STATUS
		Met / Not Met
2A.1.1 Records are kept of all information enquiries.	All client contact is recorded on a day sheet and then a box is ticked to demonstrate that this has been recorded on Charitylog. All contact is recorded on Charitylog. If clients do not give a name they are recorded as anonymous. The I&A service management document contains information and instructions in relation to this.	Met
2A.1.2 Records are kept of all advice and casework enquiries	The QAA identified no issues in relation to case recording and identified that records were full and contained all the necessary information under appropriate headings. Staff are given instructions and training in relation to the format and content of these records.	Met
2A.1.3 There is an accessible storage system in place enabling quick and accurate retrieval of records	Records are stored on Charitylog and records for all mystery shopper enquiries could be located.	Met
2A.1.4 Cases are managed efficiently, progressed in time to comply with relevant key	The QAA did not demonstrate any issues in relation to delays on the file. Staff are clearly aware of the need to record key dates. These are recorded on Charitylog. A Charitylog function is used to complete an action reminder and this is the default page when an	Met

<p>dates, and closed when work has been completed.</p>	<p>adviser logs on. All staff can access the action reminders and this is something that the I&A Manager checks on a regular basis. He can therefore identify key dates when staff are absent but also generally to monitor the build up of work. Staff interviewed were clearly aware of the dates that needed to be recorded.</p>	
<p>2A.1.5 Letter, phone and email correspondence is dealt with promptly and linked to client records</p>	<p>Emails are checked on a daily basis. Post coming into Age UK Wiltshire is checked at manager level, it is date stamped and passed to the I&A Manager who distributes it and can therefore identify if there are any concerns raised and can also deal with urgent matters in the event of staff absence.</p>	<p>Met</p>
<p>2A.1.6 Advisers have been trained on relevant policies and procedures, and understand what is required of them</p>	<p>Advisers are given information about policies at an induction meeting, they are advised by the I&A Manager if any policies change and these are then kept in the office manual to which they all have access. The office manual is very comprehensive.</p>	<p>Met</p>
<p>Overall score for 2A.1 and any comments:</p> <p>Met.</p>		

Benchmark 2A.2: Advisers have access to technical supervision and support. There is a robust system in place for the regular monitoring and review of information and advice given

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	STATUS
2A.2.1 Advisers have access to technical advice, guidance and support provided by a competent person	The I&A Manager is always available for support and staff also describe how there is a culture of discussion and support within the team. Staff are not under pressure to provide advice where they do not feel able to do so.	Met
2A.2.2 Advisers receive regular technical support and supervision	<p>The paid staff begin work at 9 in the morning but the phones do not open until 10. During this hour the I&A Manager and staff meet to discuss any issues, developments in local services, problem cases etc. The I&A Manager attends meetings with other advice providers and information is fed back during this time. It is also an opportunity for the I and A manager to look at work levels and pressures on advisers. Staff describe this as a particularly valuable time. The discussions are informal so all staff are able to bring up things that they have discovered during the course of their work, for example, other services that they have become aware of. In addition to this the I&A Manager recognises the need for more in-depth meetings so staff meetings are arranged. These are generally arranged when there are more lengthy discussions required because it does necessitate the service being suspended while the meeting takes place. In the last 12 months there have been 3 such meetings (April 14, August 14 and Jan15)</p> <p>The I&A Manager also undertakes 1 to 1 supervision, this is initially undertaken on a monthly basis but thereafter the frequency will be determined by the member of staff's level of experience although there will be at least 2 a year. There is a fixed agenda for these meetings covering work load, training needs, problems etc., there is an opportunity for staff to bring up any issues that they have.</p>	Met
2A.2.3 Information and advice given to clients, is regularly checked for accuracy	The I&A Manager uses Charitylog to check the advice records for all advisers for the previous day. For new and inexperienced advisers he would read all records but then for the more experienced advisers he is able to scroll through the advice picking up on	Met

	the more lengthy queries or those covering more unusual subject areas.	
2A.2.4 Client records are corrected or updated based on findings from regular checks	If during the course of these records being checked the I&A Manager identifies any gaps or any issues, these are flagged up with staff. This is done very soon after advice has been given which then enables the clients to be contacted and the advice supplemented where necessary.	Met
2A.2.5 There is an Independent File Review (IFR) procedure in place	There is an independent file review procedure in place. The I&A Manager selects files for all staff. The number of files is determined by the level of experience of the member of staff (but at least one per month is undertaken) although were there to be any concerns in relation to the staff member's performance then the number and frequency could be increased. For the independent file reviews the I&A Manager uses a file review sheet. The I and A manager's files are reviewed by Age UK colleagues in the region.	Met
2A.2.6 Corrective action identified through IFR is recorded and acted upon	Where corrective action is identified through the IFR it is entered onto Charitylog under the action reminders so that it is flagged up to staff as soon as they log onto the system. The I&A Manager is then able to monitor this to ensure that the outstanding issues are completed. Issues identified in IFR are raised in supervision.	Met
2A.2.7 The case checking and file review systems are reviewed regularly and meet the needs of the staff and volunteers and the service	The case checking and file review systems are reviewed to ensure that an appropriate level of supervision is undertaken according to the member of staff's level of skill and experience.	Met
<p>Overall score for 2A.2 and any comments:</p> <p>Met. There is an extremely effective use of Charitylog to enable the I&A Manager to effectively monitor the quality of advice given.</p>		

Benchmark 2A.3: Advisers have the skills and competencies required to provide Information and Advice. There is a process to support accurate, internal and external signposting.

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	STATUS
2A.3.1 Staff and volunteers meet the competences and skill requirements for their roles	There are job descriptions and person specifications for all posts.	Met
2A.3.2 Staff and volunteers are clear about the boundaries of the service, and lines of accountability	It is clear that staff understand the boundaries of the service. They understand the limits of their remit and do not attempt to operate beyond this. There is an organisational structure chart which shows lines of accountability.	Met
2A.3.3 Enquiries and casework are allocated to staff and volunteers according to level of competence and experience	<p>The I&A Manager has configured the service to ensure that it is delivered by staff and volunteers operating at an appropriate level.</p> <p>The organisation maintains a list of volunteers who generally assist in the completion of Attendance Allowance forms. Where an Attendance Allowance form requiring a home visit is identified the matter is passed to the I&A Manager and a record is placed on a board in the I&A Office. This is to ensure that the matter is progressed. The I&A Manager appoints a volunteer and diarises the return of the form in his diary at least one week before the deadline for submission. The volunteer will attend, complete the form and any other necessary paperwork, returning this to the I&A Manager who then takes responsibility for sending off the form and giving any necessary advice. The paid staff therefore are responsible for the files as the organisation recognises that volunteers are not able to come into the office every day and only work part time. Staff interviewed explained that different advisers have different areas that they specialise in and can accept referrals in their specialism. In practice, the original adviser can retain the matter with support from the relevant specialist and thereby they develop their skills and knowledge.</p>	Met

<p>2A.3.4 Staff and volunteers know when and how to signpost and refer cases to other appropriate advice providers</p>	<p>The I&A Manager works hard to ensure that staff are aware of other advice providers in the area and staff and volunteers know when and how to signpost and refer cases. The organisation keeps an unmet needs log so that if advisers are unable to find an organisation to which they can signpost or refer that it will be entered into the log and further work will be done to identify how to deal with these gaps.</p> <p>Previously this unmet needs log identified a gap in terms of legal help but this has now been resolved by the recruitment of legal advice volunteers.</p>	<p>Met</p>
<p>2A.3.5 If specialised advice (i.e. debt, immigration or financial) is given , there are appropriate licences</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>Met</p>
<p>Overall score for 2A.3 and any comments:</p> <p>Met</p>		

Benchmark 2A.4: The service has procedures in place to protect client confidentiality, to avoid conflict of interest and to comply with data protection legislation.

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	STATUS
2A.4.1 Client information is stored and used confidentially, and complies with data protection legislation	Client information is saved on Charitylog which is password protected. Volunteers must sign a confidentiality agreement.	Met
2A.4.2 Staff and volunteers are knowledgeable about confidentiality and data requirements for clients' information	Staff interviewed were aware of the confidentiality policy which sets out both confidentiality and data protection issues.	Met
2A.4.3 Client consent is obtained in line with data protection legislation and other internal guidance	There is a policy for obtaining consent; the QAA Report demonstrated that all appropriate consents had been obtained.	
2A.4.4 There is a clear process for managing conflict of interests in advice enquiries	The policy regarding obtaining consent in line with data protection involves useful information regarding the need to identify the client. This is an important first step in avoiding conflicts of interest. The organisation also has a very useful conflict of interest policy. This is particular well written and clear and cites good examples of conflicts of interest in terms of advice, trustees and funders and products and services. This enables staff to understand where conflict situations could arise and therefore to avoid them. The I and A manager specifically considers conflicts as part of case checking and IFR	Met
2A.4.5 There is a clear process for managing conflict of interests in relation to trustees and funders	Board members are required to declare interests, this information is then forwarded to the I&A Manager who would disseminate this information to staff. Board members disclosed interests at every board meeting and the I and A manager considers these	Met

	in case any conflicts are identified.	
2A.4.6 There is a clear process in place for managing conflict of interests in relation to Age UK products and services	The organisation understands the need to offer independent advice to clients who require products and services and that the Age UK products should not be the only products for which advice is given. The mystery shopper exercise demonstrates that this is the case.	Met
<p>Overall score for 2.A4 and any comments:</p> <p>Met.</p>		

2B: Planning, Access, Review and Feedback:

The Information and Advice service plans and monitors its services and seeks feedback from clients and other stakeholders. Feedback is used to support the provision of an independent and accessible service to the community

Benchmark 2B.1: The Information and Advice service plans for the delivery of information and advice services based on an understanding of the community and accurate and proportionate monitoring of outcomes. There is a realistic plan in place for the delivery of the service.

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	STATUS
2B.1.1 There is a written plan for how services will be delivered and how they will be resourced. The plan is in detail for the next 12 months and in outline for the following two years.	There is a business plan, the I&A Manager undertakes a core contract review and plans for the future. The challenges identified are cuts in local authority funding, increases in demand and the availability of less help from other organisations.	Met
2B.1.2 There is a procedure for monitoring the number and type of enquiries	The organisation monitors the number of enquiries and area of work.	Met
2B.1.3 There is a procedure for monitoring the profile of clients	The organisation has in the past monitored the profile of clients in terms of gender, geographical area, disabilities and ethnicity and they have done this during the collection of feedback. The I&A Manager has now identified that Charitylog can be used much more effectively to obtain this information and has now designed a data catcher sheet which will enable reports to be drawn.	Met
2B.1.4 The profile of the users is compared with local community profile to identify gaps	The profile of users has been compared to census information. Whilst Wiltshire is not a particularly ethnically diverse area, the I&A Manager is aware of the need to ensure that advice is provided to all local groups. He is therefore forging links with the Racial Equality Council and other local groups working with minority groups in the area to	Met

	ensure that they are aware of the services provided by the organisation. Working with these groups it is hoped that any barriers in terms of those groups seeking advice can be identified and addressed.	
2B.1.5 Client outcomes are monitored	The organisation monitors outcomes and in particular monitors the additional benefits claimed by clients.	Met
2B.1.6 Service delivery is planned taking account of monitoring and profile data	The organisation has worked hard to ensure that clients throughout the area are assisted. The Wiltshire area is an extensive one and predominantly rural and this does present some challenges. It was identified that there was some difficulties in clients in certain geographical areas being covered by home visits but the organisation has worked hard to recruit advisers in those areas to ensure that assistance is provided for them. The organisation also targets lunch clubs, day centres and also does some outreach events for example in supermarkets to get the message out to all older people in the area.	Met
<p>Overall score for 2B.1 and any comments:</p> <p>Met.</p>		

Benchmark 2B.2: The Information and Advice service provides up to date and accurate information about its information and advice services. Services are accessible to the community

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	STATUS
2B.2.1 Information about what to expect from the service is given to clients and prospective clients	Clients are advised that the service is independent, confidential and free.	Met
2B.2.2 Services are delivered in a way that is accessible to the local community	The majority of access to advice is by telephone. There are home visits arranged throughout the whole area and this is supplemented by outreach events where displays are done and preliminary advice offered in supermarkets, lunch clubs, day centres etc. The I&A Manager gives talks to other groups and has identified that a good way of delivering advice is to visit groups, day centres etc., on 2 consecutive weeks, the first week to give a talk about the service and the second week to pick up on any queries that individuals have. This gives clients an opportunity to think about whether they have any queries, to mention it to people that they might know and also to make sure that they have the necessary documentation with them. The organisation is seeking funding for an advice bus that can travel around the area to improve access.	Met
2B.2.3 Staff and volunteers are aware of accessibility issues that might affect clients	The organisation is aware there are people that may not be able to access the service. However, they are reassured that people who would not be able to self-refer to the organisation do get referred through care co-ordinators appointed through GP surgeries and through the good neighbours scheme. The organisation has now used the Planning for Later Life funding to widen coverage. There is also a home from hospital service within the organisation that deals with very vulnerable people and they refer people back into the I&A Service. Work has been done to make sure that staff delivering all the services within Age UK Wiltshire are aware of the I&A Service. All staff have been given basic training on benefits, not so that they can give advice but so that they can spot appropriate issues.	Met

<p>2B.2.4 Services are publicised in a variety of places</p>	<p>Services are publicised through GP surgeries, day centres, lunch clubs etc. Work has been done to make links with other organisations e.g. community groups, healthcare providers, GP surgeries etc. They are also included in directories i.e. Wiltshire County Council and on the websites of other service providers e.g. dementia web.</p>	<p>Met</p>
<p>2B.2.5 Services are available as publicised</p>	<p>Services are available as publicised and mystery shoppers identified no issues in relation to access to the service. The telephone line is integrated into the national line and this helps where the service is particularly busy.</p>	<p>Met</p>
<p>2B.2.6 There is a policy for notifying clients and partners of changes in service provision, and changes are shared with national and local partners</p>	<p>In the event of an interruption in the service the national line, reception and the admin department would be informed. There is a protocol which is on display in the admin office which sets out methods of contacting all staff, the clients with appointments and making amendments to the answer machine and website. It is noted that the only interruptions in the service have generally been planned i.e. for training and staff meetings.</p>	<p>Met</p>
<p>Overall score for 2B.2 and any comments:</p> <p>Met</p>		

Benchmark 2B.3: The service has access to and uses up to date legal, local and national information and advice resources.

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	STATUS
2B.3.1 Up to date details of local and national service providers are available to clients	The I&A Manager has prepared detailed folders setting out information about local and national service providers. These are arranged alphabetically under for example debt, dementia, care etc. The I&A Manager ensures that these are reviewed and updated regularly although other staff can add to these files if necessary, if they become aware of a useful other service. A separate file is maintained in relation to Swindon which falls under the remit of another local authority.	Met
2B.3.2 Up to date information on local and national advice providers is available to clients	The I&A Manager keeps up to date information on local and national advice providers so that referrals can be made. The organisation keeps a log of un-met needs to cover circumstances where they have struggled to make appropriate referrals. This has helped them make changes to the service to address these issues.	Met
2B.3.3 Resources for legal information and advice are available for advisers and are kept up to date	The organisation has all Age UK factsheets and leaflets, they have up to date welfare benefits posters and appropriate reference books, the I&A Manager takes responsibility for ensuring that these are up to date.	Met
2B.3.4 Advisers keep up to date with relevant changes to legislation and practice	The I&A Manager ensures that he circulates the Age UK monthly update, he also keeps staff up to date with any changes in legislation and practice in the meetings that take place daily between 9am and 10am. Where there are significant changes in legislation for example recently in terms of PIP and Universal Credit, more detailed training is organised.	Met
<p>Overall score for 2B.3 and any comments:</p> <p>Met.</p>		

Benchmark 2B.4: The service actively encourages, collects and responds to feedback from users, including complaints

INDICATOR	FINDINGS	STATUS
2B.4.1 Clients are encouraged to give feedback, including complaints	The organisation has a compliments, comments and complaints form, this is on display in reception and there is also a poster referring to it. Clients are therefore encouraged to give feedback.	Met
2B.4.2 Complaints are dealt with appropriately and promptly	Whilst the majority of feedback is positive there is a policy for dealing with complaints. This is a very detailed and thorough policy and demonstrates that the organisation takes complaints very seriously.	Met
2B.4.3 Client satisfaction is monitored	There is a client satisfaction survey where clients are contacted and all feedback is regularly reviewed.	Met
2B.4.4 Client feedback and information from complaints is used to inform future plans	The complaints procedure requires all complaints to be recorded even where these amount to simply an expression of dissatisfaction that has been informally resolved. This means that trends can be identified readily. Complaints are discussed at the management team meetings as a standing agenda item and are reviewed 4 monthly by the management team to see whether any changes are necessary as a result of issues identified.	Met
<p>Overall score for 2B.4 and any comments:</p> <p>Met</p>		

9. Age UK Information and Advice Quality Programme Recommendations

Age UK: Wiltshire

Date of Review: 29 January 2015

Part 1 Quality of Advice	Recommendations
<p>1.1 Establishing the facts and diagnosing the problem 1.1.1) The adviser obtains sufficient information about the client's query and circumstances to enable complete advice to be given on the main or presenting problem</p>	<p>Ensure that all aspects of the enquiry have been explored including involvement of other parties.</p>
<p>1.2 Advice 1.2.3) The adviser has considered how the client's circumstances meet any relevant eligibility criteria 1.2.4) The adviser has advised correctly on the likely outcomes of the case or enquiry and prospects of success</p>	<p>In all cases involving a claim for Attendance Allowance, there should be an indication of the rate expected in the case notes.</p>
<p>1.3 Action or support 1.3.1) The adviser has correctly assessed whether further action is needed and by whom.</p>	<p>Note whether an offer of help in contacting other organisations on behalf of the client had been made and /or refused.</p> <p>Ensure that the client is capable of acting on their own behalf, and that all proposed actions are noted.</p>

Benchmark	Recommendations (consult with your IADA about likely timescales and any support needed to meet these)
	Note that recommendations in bold need to be evidenced in order to meet the benchmark.
Part 2A Enquiry and Case Management	None
Part 2B Planning, Access, Review and Feedback	The organisation has in the past monitored the profile of clients in terms of gender, geographical area, disabilities and ethnicity and they have done this during the collection of feedback. The I&A Manager has now identified that Charitylog can be used much more effectively to obtain this information and has now designed a data catcher sheet which will enable reports to be drawn.