

CASE STUDY 1

Mrs A aged 67, lived alone and was struggling to look after herself due to health problems. These included severe arthritis, hypothyroidism, depression and intermittent vertigo.

She needed help claiming Attendance Allowance as the money would enable her to pay for the help she needed.

We helped her complete the form and make the application, based on our experience we estimated that she should qualify at the least for the lower rate. A few weeks later Mrs A was very disappointed when her claim was refused. She had the impression that this was because she did not have a 'carer'. We were able to confirm that this was not a requirement of the benefit and recommended that she request a reconsideration of the decision. We helped write a detailed letter explaining that the benefit was being claimed to pay for help and reinforced the daily difficulties she had due to her health problems.

A few weeks later Mrs A was delighted to receive a letter awarding her the higher rate of Attendance Allowance, £82.30 per week. We were also able to help her claim a further £194 Council Tax Reduction.

As a result of our support Mrs A was able to claim money that she was entitled to. She would not have felt confident to challenge the decision by herself and would have believed that she was not entitled.

She reported that 'the difference it made was incredible'. She had brought some small aids for the house and was going to pay for help around the house. This would make her daily life more manageable despite the pain she was living with.

Whilst dealing with the benefits Mrs A mentioned that her house was very cold and affected her health and wellbeing. We were able to refer her to our in-house winter Energy Checks project which fitted energy saving equipment such as draught excluders, radiator foil etc., for free.

CASE STUDY 2

Mrs T, an independent 80 year old attended our drop-in advice service, explaining that she had been up until 3am the previous night trying to fill in a Blue Badge application form. She had found it quite confusing and was very upset.

We went through the form with her and made sure all the relevant details were completed and explained the process that would need to be followed.

A few weeks later Mrs T was delighted to confirm that she had received her Blue Badge. It was a huge help and enabled her to keep mobile, independent and active.

CASE STUDY 3

Mrs W, aged 72, had recently lost her husband and was living alone. She was surviving on £104 a week and struggling. Her rent alone was £107. Her small savings were rapidly being eaten up by meeting daily living costs and she was worried about what would happen after that was gone. Having a heart condition this additional worry was not good for her health.

Her sister had encouraged her to seek advice from Age UK Wolverhampton. Mrs W found the whole welfare benefits system very confusing and was convinced that her small savings meant she was not entitled to any financial help.

We carried out a benefit check which indicated that she would qualify for Pension Credit Guarantee and full help with her rent and council tax. Mrs W was both surprised and pleased to hear this. She was also given information about Attendance Allowance, to consider if she wished to apply.

Mrs W was awarded Pension Credit of £36 per week and full help with her rent and council tax. This meant that she was £158 better off each week.

The reduced financial pressure meant she could focus on dealing with her bereavement and start to become more socially active again and look after her health.

“You were so easy to understand and explained it all to me very well. I wouldn’t have been able to do it all if you had not been there to help”