



Case study

**Age UK Norfolk GP information
and advice service**

Summary

Age UK Norfolk is providing free non-medical information and advice at 13 GP practices in South Norfolk for people over 65 and their carers. This includes housing and care advice under their First Stop project.

GPs and practice nurses are able to refer patients to the service, or patients can book their own appointment without referral if they wish. Age UK Norfolk's trained advisers, working with partner organisations, are available to provide practical help and support on a wide range of later life issues, including social care, benefits, dementia support, befriending, caring for older relatives, help at home, housing options and Lasting Power of Attorney.

NHS South Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group and Norfolk County Council are funding the service up to February 2016 as part of their 'Better Care for Norfolk' and 'Strong and Well' programmes

Sessions take place once a week in the morning although some sessions are in the afternoon. Clients can contact their GP for an appointment.

Name of project - GP information and advice service

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Email - lin.mathews@ageuknorfolk.org.uk

Region - East

Location - South Norfolk

Website - <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/norfolk/free-information-advice--support/gp-information-and-advice-service/>

Target population - People over 65 and their carers

Activity to date

Since January 2015, Age UK Norfolk have seen 643 patients.

Examples of how the service has helped include emotional and practical support to combat distress, help with transport, combatting loneliness and help/care at home, adaptations to the home such as arranging a Disabled Facilities Grant for a wet room, and help for people living with dementia by arranging support with an Admiral nurse, with Attendance Allowance and consequent council tax reduction.

Outcomes

Embedding information and advice in GP Practices maximises health outcomes for patients and reduces the impact on primary and secondary healthcare. The benefits to patients include:

- Supporting regular attenders and those with long-term conditions to better manage their own health and welfare
- Enabling frail and vulnerable patients to live independently for longer through better community and welfare support
- Reducing loneliness and isolation – as impactful on health as giving up smoking
- Reducing poverty, identified as the greatest threat to health, by ensuring that all vulnerable patients are accessing their full benefit entitlement
- Tackling debt – a key issue in emotional and mental health
- Supporting patients to access and engage with the diversity of community activities and support available to improve overall wellbeing and ultimately empower patients to better manage their condition.

Case study

Victor (aged 81) was referred to one of our advisers in a medical practice in February. He was emotional and very upset following the death of his wife on Christmas Eve. Not only sad, Victor was feeling lonely and a little isolated having lost his long term friend and companion.

Victor was not sure if he wanted, or could afford, to stay living in the matrimonial house. He was finding it difficult financially and doubted if he could continue to pay for his home help who visited him twice a week.

Our adviser provided reassurance and support and explained that there were several avenues open to Victor, including bereavement counselling, befriending, social activities and housing options which could be explored if and when he was ready. Initially our adviser focused on befriending and noticing that Victor walked with a stick, she mentioned to Victor that he might be entitled to Attendance Allowance, a non-means tested benefit payable to those experiencing difficulty with personal care. She ordered the form for him and explained that we could visit him at home to help with its completion.

Since meeting Victor in February, Age UK Norfolk has arranged for a volunteer befriender to call him on a regular basis. He is very grateful and looks forward to the calls. He has also joined an art class and is attending a lunch club. Victor has visited our adviser several times and most recently she provided details of the local University of the Third Age (U3A).

Following Age UK Norfolk's help to complete an Attendance Allowance application Victor is receiving the benefit at the higher rate. Now he has no doubt that he will continue with his home help who has been a pillar of strength at this difficult time.

Although Victor is on the waiting list for a council bungalow he is not rushing into anything. Our adviser arranged for a social services assessment and grab rails have been fitted by his back door. This is allowing him to enjoy the garden where he has so many happy memories. And what did Victor say?

"Age UK Norfolk has helped me step by step and you have all been fantastic. I would recommend this service to anyone."

For more good practice case studies and further information about housing and health see our [website](#).

We would welcome any feedback about content.

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