

Disability Advice Service



East Suffolk

CIO Charity Number
1152772



Annual Report and Accounts

1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015



Highlights – 2014/2015

- This is the 30th year that the Disability Advice Service has been offering advice and support to disabled people and carers in Suffolk Coastal.
- We have supported our clients to gain an additional **£1,826,596** in benefits.
- We have advised **1,093 Clients**
- We have dealt with **6,166 Enquiries**.
- We **won 90%** of the appeals and reconsiderations where a decision was reached.
- We **gave £4,595** as small grants to individuals.
- We entered into partnership with the Multiple Sclerosis Society to deliver advice to their members across our area.
- We completed year one of our Lloyds TSB funded project achieving all targets, and received funding for a second year.
- We held our first Customer Forum in January 2015, setting the scene for the development of our new business plan in 2016.

Disability Advice Service (East Suffolk)

**14 The Square
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Ipswich
Suffolk
IP5 3SL**

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E-mail: admin@daseastsuffolk.org.uk

Management Committee

Stella Morris	Trustee (Chair from September 2014)
Simon Shaw	Trustee (Secretary)
Robin Stroud	Trustee (Treasurer)
Jo Cowley	Trustee (Chair up until September 2014)
Yvonne Everson	Trustee
Brendan McArdle	Trustee (Resigned November 2014)
Andy Simpson	Trustee
Nigel Farthing	Trustee
Jean Gooch	Trustee
Stephen Doe	Trustee
Steve Tucker	Trustee
Janet Garfield	Suffolk Coastal District Council substitute
Doreen Savage	Suffolk Coastal District Council co-optee

Patron	Independent Examiner
Kevin Curtis	Teresa Rose

Paid Staff

Jenny Morcom	Manager
Caroline Goldsmith	Senior Welfare Rights Adviser
Colin Williamson	Administration & Fundraising Officer
Donna Keenan	Welfare Rights & Appeals Officer
Jess Hargrave	Welfare Rights Adviser

Volunteers

Anne Barnes	Susan Saggars
Simon Shaw	Alan Parsons
Diana Thomas	Evangeline Fisher
Mike Yates	Roz McSweeney
Donna Frankis	Margaret Shaw
Louise Liddell	Liz Warden
Jess Hargraves	Moira Bevilacqua
Glenis White	Catherine Morrison
Dee Woolnough	Sarah Sharman
Mark Adams	Leslie Newport
Sue MacGregor	Brendan McArdle
Olivia Mansfield	Mou Samuel
Jeff Smith	

Disability Advice Service East Suffolk (DAS) is an independent advice service for disabled people and their carers who live in the Suffolk Coastal area. We are part of a wider network of disability advice services throughout Suffolk working to county-wide standards that are equivalent to nationally agreed community legal services (CLS) standards. Our last audit by Suffolk County Council was in 2013 and confirmed that we had achieved the required standards.

Our charitable objective is the relief of people with disabilities in East Suffolk, and our aim is for disabled people and their carers to have increased financial, social and psychological well-being through holistic advice. All financial, strategic and operational decisions by the Trustees are made with due regard to our charitable objective, aim, and the Charity Commission's Public Benefit Guidance.

To this end we provide advice on welfare rights, housing rights, accessible leisure activities, equipment, health and social care services, employment rights and permitted work, as well as referral to accredited providers for debt and legal advice. We are constantly developing our working relationships and partnerships with related organisations so that no-one in need of help and advice gets passed from pillar-to-post.

This has been a year of consolidation for DAS, where we have focussed on 4 important issues: -

- Keeping the organisation afloat in a situation of rising costs and falling public funding.
- Rebuilding our customer numbers after our move from Cedar House to our new offices
- Maintaining and improving the quality of our service, its responsiveness to customer needs and the depth of our advice
- Assisting our customers to deal with the challenges of welfare reform.

I am pleased to say that we achieved the challenging target of raising £43K to balance our budget, and that after a fall in customer numbers in the months following our move to Martlesham Heath we ended up seeing more people than ever! And we continue to work hard to ensure that all our customers receive an excellent service. We encourage an atmosphere of honest feedback and peer review in our offices so that all staff and volunteers are able to help each other to achieve and maintain high standards.

Here I would personally like to thank Col who reminds us constantly to keep our electronic and paper recording systems accurate, complete and up-to-date. This is a constant battle and he deserves our praise for his persistence!

This year has been a record year for benefit gain, with over £1.8 M going to disabled people to be spent in their local communities. We helped over 1,000 customers, dealt with over 6,000 enquiries, and challenged 144 benefit decisions winning 90% of completed challenges. We would like to thank our paid staff and our appeals team for their hard work and success. We continued our small grants programme, raising £4,595 towards necessary items or help for individual customers that could not be funded in any other way. Once again our thanks go to our tireless volunteer small grants officer who devotes so much time and energy to helping our customers through financial crises.

It is important to note that these numbers do not completely illustrate the increasing complexity of the casework undertaken by DAS. As welfare reform progresses we are seeing more and more disabled people and carers in extreme hardship with multiple problems in their lives.

On the plus side, we were extremely happy when our trainee proved herself capable of taking on the role of advisor last April, leading our work with the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Our new Welfare Rights and Appeals officer completed the first year of her project funded by Lloyds TSB achieving all the project targets with flying colours. We held the first meeting of our Customer Forum in January, and we are building on this to ensure our customers have the opportunity to help plan and influence the services they receive from DAS!

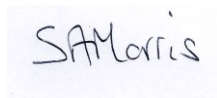
DAS welcomed Dee Woolnough, Sarah Sharman, Sue Macgregor, Jeff Smith, Marc Adams, Olivier Mansfield and Lesley Newport to DAS as new volunteers during the year. We were very sad when Sue Saggars who had volunteered with DAS for 10 years, decided that she needed more time at home to deal with a house move and caring responsibilities. Three other excellent volunteers, Cathy Morris, Jeff Smith and Glenis White, left us and we wish them all the best for the future. After a 5 year struggle Lesley finally lost her battle with cancer, but not before she had become a valued volunteer within the DAS team.

Brendan McArdle made the decision to leave our Management Committee after many years of service. Fortunately for us Brendan continues to support DAS as a volunteer.

Lastly I would like to thank all our Trustees, staff, volunteers, funders and supporters in the local community who together make DAS such a trusted and expert service.

Stella Morris

(Chair)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stella Morris". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light blue rectangular background.

Celebrating 30 Years

This is DAS' 30th year of operation and the numbers of disabled people and carers using our service continue to grow. Whilst on the one hand DAS' survival and growing customer base is cause for celebration, it is also evidence that many of the complex issues surrounding disability have not been resolved.

We still need to ask the question 'why is there such a thing as disability?' or to put it another way 'why does society make it so difficult for people with some kinds of impairments, especially when most of the changes needed would be good for everyone?'

Disability is an issue that affects us all, as most of us will become disabled, carers or both at some point in our lives. The prevalence of disability rises with age – around 1 in 20 children are disabled, compared to around 1 in 5 working age adults, and almost 1 in 2 people over State Pension age. The additional cost of disability is estimated to be around £550 per month. Coupled with the limited chances of a disabled person earning a living wage, this means that disabled people are more likely to be in financial hardship than many others in the community!¹

Looking forward to the coming year, DAS faces the twin challenges of fundraising against a background of increased competition and cuts in public spending, whilst we develop new ways to support our customers through welfare reform and the continued effects of the recent economic downturn.

Our current staffing structure comprises

Manager	30 hours/week
Senior Advisor	30 hours/week
Advisor	7.5 hours/week
Welfare Rights and Appeals Officer	18 hours/week ²
Administration and Fundraising Officer	16 hours/week

Over the years we have had an estimated 100 Volunteers, 4 Senior Advisors, 6 Managers, over 20 Trustees and 3 Administrators.

DAS' timeline

- 1985 DAS began with two volunteers giving advice and information over the telephone to elderly and disabled people in the Suffolk Coastal area.
- 1989 A part-time paid Manager was appointed,
- 1990 We became a Registered Charity with our own Management Committee.
- 1991 We appointed a part-time Senior Adviser.
- 1996 DAS moved from a cramped single room into new offices at Cedar House.
- 2013 We became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and moved from Cedar House to 14 The Square, Martlesham Heath

¹ Figures are from Office for Disability Issues updated Department for Work and Pensions estimates based on Family Resources survey 2009/10

² contract ends November 2015

I present the statement of financial activities and balance sheet I have prepared for the year ended 31 March 2015.

The year has seen continued high activity and I have to report that we finished the year with a £659 deficit. Despite this, we had an income of over £98K and this has been achieved by the hard work in attracting an increase in donations, grants' and fundraising. This leaves us with reasonably healthy final bank balance of £65,890. In line with our financial policies £49,770 is our reserves fund and £16,120 restricted funds.

Never the less, we should not rest on our laurels, as the predicted spend for 2015-16 is £102,555

During my time as Treasurer I continue to be very impressed by the total efforts of the staff, committee and volunteers in the delivery of a quality service and the combined contribution to the financial aspect both visible and hidden.

As I have mentioned previously, the voluntary efforts in advisor work, administration, IT support, committee duties and fundraising have a tremendous hidden value. A conservative estimate of the total number of hours involved with this is some 60 hours a week. Therefore, over a year at say £26 an hour if they had to be paid for, these efforts have contributed a hidden income or saving on expenditure of over £80,000

All involved have to be congratulated and I would like to thank all those involved and extend special thanks to those that have assisted me directly with the accounts work over the year.

Robin Stroud
July 2015



Disability Advice Service (East Suffolk)
Reg. Charity 1152772

BALANCE SHEET
As at 31 March 2015

20013-14	Activity	2014-15	2013-14	Assets	2014-15
£		£	£		£
236	Cash	135	135	Cash	317
2,135	Current account	429	429	Current a/c	12,081
	Deposit account			Deposit a/c	
43,203	CCLA	43,433	43,433	CCLA	53,592
22,223		22,552	22,552	Lloyds High Interest account	
130		90	90	Held for Coastal Forum in current	*See note below
67,927					
	Unpresented cheques			Unpresented cheque 1108	(100)
		66,639			
(616)	Deficit	(659)			
(632)					
(40)					
66,639		65,980	66,639		65,890
			10,558	Reserves/	49,770
			56,081	Restricted funds	16,120

*Note. As the £590 held in the current account for the Coastal Forum is not DAS funds, it has been removed from the General Accounts and Balance sheet. It is accounted for on the Current account reconciliation statement

Agreed to be a true and accurate statement of our accounts, which have been duly examined

Robin Stroud
Treasurer

R.E. Stroud

Stella Morris
Chair

SAMorris

Disability Advice Service (East Suffolk ANNUALACCOUNTS

GENERAL ACCOUNT 2014-2015

2013-14	Expenditure	2014-15	2013-14	Income	2014-15
56,273	Salaries & payroll charges	68,598	33,150	SCC Grant	32,653
	Recruitment		15,000	Lloyds	15,000
4,786	Rent and Service charges	11,197	30,041	Donations & Grants	
3,004	Travel	3,741	1,000	Suffolk Community Foundation Port Community Fund	
744	Training	500		MS Society	1,000
3,119	Telephone/fax	2,545		Donations	2,402
781	Postage	565	230	CCLA interest	159
838	Stationery	578			
1,795	Insurance	1,840	1,299	Fund raising	45,179
	Publicity	260	329	Lloyds TSB HR interest	
67	AGM expenses	92			
135	Refreshments	132			
2,142	Publications, books & subscriptions	590			
111	County Group			County Group	
48	Fees and gifts	104		Gifts	
2,489	Computer & office equipment	1,855			
4,873	Move	3,462	6,115	Move reimbursement	2,394
332	Premises (cleaning)	1,051			
461	Fund raising costs	311			
294	Legal /DBS/ Licences	55			
142	Warmer homes project		142	Warmer Homes project	
1,153	Utilities	1,970			
4,335	Special Project				
87,922	Sub total	99,446			
(616)	Deficit	(659)			
87,306		98,787	87,306		98,787

Grants and Donations 1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015

LOCAL AUTHORITY GRANTS	£
Aldringham Parish Council	85
Bawdsey Parish Council	50
Blaxhall Parish Council	20
Bramfield and Thorington Parish Council	100
Brandiston Parish Council	50
Bromeswell Parish Council	30
Clopton Parish Council	50
Darsham Parish Council	30
Grundisburgh & Culpho Parish Council	50
Great Glemham Parish Council	50
Iken Parish Council	15
Little Glemham Parish Council	40
Leiston Town Council	50
Martlesham Parish Council	400
Otley Parish Council	50
Pettistree Parish Council	100
Rendham Parish Council	30
Rendlesham Parish Council	200
Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council	250
Snape Parish Council	50
Suffolk County Council	32,653
Westleton Parish Council	25
Tunstall Parish Council	200
Wickham Market Parish Council	50
Woodbridge Town Council	1,000
Yoxford Parish Council	50
Total	35,678

Other Major Grants and Donations

ORGANISATION	£
Annie Tranmer Charitable Trust	£1,000
Henry Smith Charity	£7,500
Lloyds TSB	15,000
The Mills Charity	1,937
Mrs LD Rope Third Charitable Settlement	17,500
Scarfe Charitable Trust	800
Suffolk Community Foundation Birketts Fund	1,493
Suffolk Community Foundation Leiston and Sizewell Fund	1,000
Suffolk Foundation Port Fund	1,000
Total	£47,230.00

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the
Disability Advice Service (East Suffolk) Registered Charity number 1152772**

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 March 2015.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and examiner The charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed

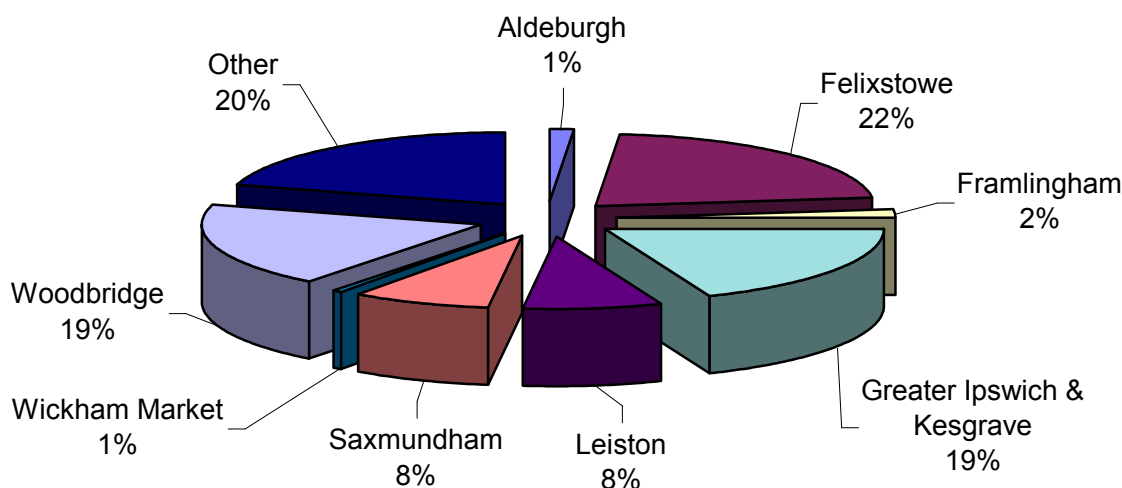


Teresa Rose MAAT Date: **28/04/15**
Independent Examiner

Financial Gain: 1 April 2014 - 31 March 2015

Benefit	Gain
Appeals	58,669.85
Attendance Allowance	134,440.15
Carers Allowance	17,772.15
Council Tax Benefit	10,274.54
Disability Living Allowance	94,666
Employment Support Allowance	596,532.57
Housing Benefit	14,930.34
Income Support	3,190.20
Industrial Injuries Bnfit	3,021.20
Job Seekers Allowance	4,978.20
Pension Credit	26,159.46
Personal Independence Payment	813,550.77
Reconsiderations	48,410.95
Total	1,826,596.38

Enquiries by Town and Surrounding Area.



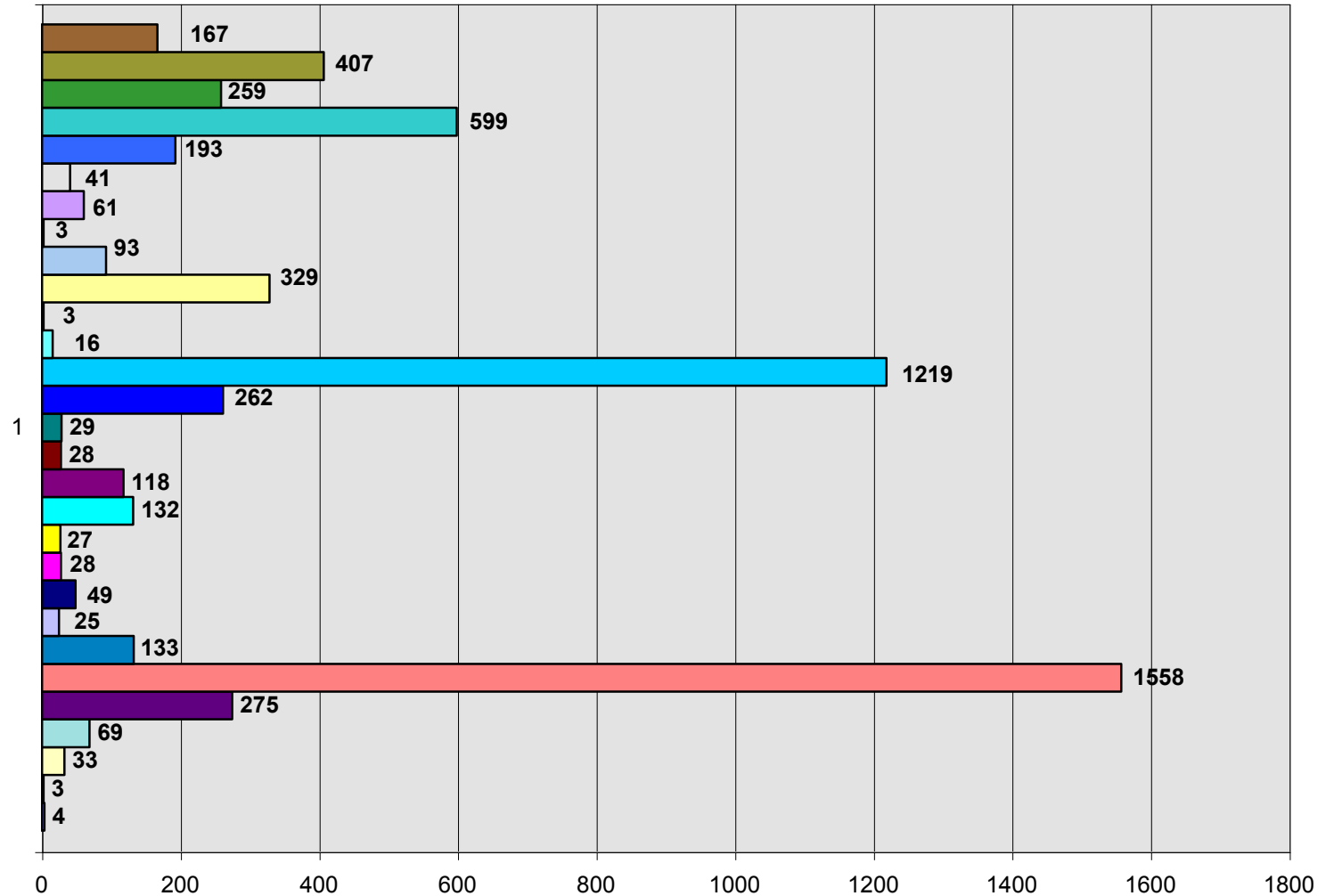
The total benefit awarded to clients as a result of our work this year was approximately £1,826,596 highlighting the essential need for our service in the East Suffolk Coastal area.

Financial Gain by Area: 1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015

Area	Gain
Aldeburgh	37,294
Felixstowe	359,206
Framlingham	45,049
Greater Ipswich & Kesgrave	345,432
Leiston	112,276
Saxmundham	166,886
Woodbridge	631,992
Other	128,461
Total	1,826,596

Enquiries By Case Category 1 April 2014 - 31 March 2015

- Access/Blue Badge/Mobility
- Appeals
- Attendance Allowance
- Benefits Unspecified
- Carer's Allowance
- Child Benefit & Child Tax Credit
- Community Care/Social Fund
- Complaints
- Council Tax
- DLA
- Education
- Employment
- ESA
- Finance/Debt/Grants
- Health
- Holidays/Leisure/Equipment
- Housing
- Housing Benefit
- Incapacity Benefit & Industrial Injuries
- Income Support
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Legal
- Pensions/Pension Credit/War Pensions
- PIP
- Reconsiderations
- Referred Out/Signposted Out
- Tax Credit/Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit
- Unspecified/Other



Clients = 1,093
Enquiries = 6,166

Disability Advice Service (East Suffolk) Helping people of all ages

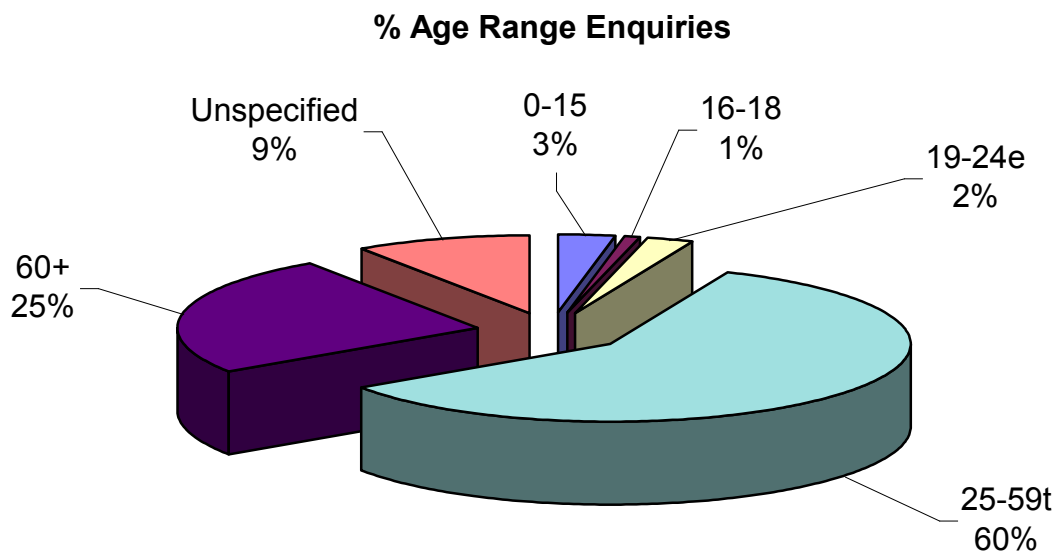
The Disability Advice Service is an independent advice service and specialises in issues relating to disabled people and their carers. We are based in Martlesham Heath, but we offer free help and advice to people over much of the Suffolk Coastal district.

The **6,166** enquiries the Disability Advice Service has received this year have been varied and encompass the following categories.

- Welfare benefits and tax credits
- Advocacy and appeals
- Housing adaptations and special equipment
- Accessible transport, holidays and leisure activities
- Help with education and employment retention
- Home and respite care
- Access issues and disability discrimination
- Fundraising

Disability can affect anyone of any age and we do our best to advise and support people of all ages who require our help.

The pie chart below shows the diverse age ranges of people affected by disability that the Disability Advice Service has been able to help during the year.



CUSTOMER COMMENTS

We pride ourselves on the quality of Service we give to our clients. However are always trying to improve the service so we politely request that clients fill out a customer satisfaction survey anonymously so we can target areas for further improvement.

Here are some of the comments made by our customers. We have left them in their own words:

- “I have always received excellent advice and service”
- “Very helpful advice given. Put my mind at ease and made my application easier to understand and complete. A friendly service”
- “Without their help I would not be able to complete my forms as they are hard to understand”
- “Cant do without your help”
- “All were very attentive + patient and inquisitive in filling form out and reassuring towards me.”
- “I was very impressed with telephone manner prior to meeting, the time and trouble taken with me+ on my behalf with wording of form completed. I cannot thank Das enough”
- “The staff have been very friendly and helpful and the advice given has proved to be invaluable. Thank you for all your help.”
- “Your advisor was very thorough and patient. I would have conceded defeat half way through”
- “ would not hesitate to refer anyone in a similar situation to D.A.S.”
- “Staff warm, welcoming made me feel relaxed and at home. Thank You”
- “I was very relaxed and felt comfortable-no question was silly – and I received excellent advice on next steps based on what was best for me. They strived to help me to the best of their ability. I would not have been able to go forward with this without their help.”
- “Caring informative”

Grants/Donations Awarded

The Disability Advice Service (East Suffolk) gratefully acknowledges the financial support of

Annie Tranmer Charitable Trust
Bramfield and Thorington Parish Council
Birketts Fund*
Leiston and Sizewell Fund*
Felixstowe Port Fund*
(*Administered by the Suffolk Foundation)
Henry Smith Charity
Lloyds TSB
The Mills Charity
Martlesham Parish Council
Pettistree Parish Council
Mrs L D Rope Third Charitable Settlement
Rendlesham Parish Council
Rushmere Parish Council
Scarfe Charitable Trust
Suffolk County Council
Tunstall Parish Council
Woodbridge Town Council

And all the town parishes and clients that have supported our work throughout the year.

Donations big or small are a vital aid in providing our service in the East Suffolk Coastal area.