**Manager’s End of Year report for March 2017**

**Our Achievements.**

Our service has continued to provide the Citizens of Wakefield District with free, comprehensive, independent advice and information to help them with their health and well-being issues. We have supported those under immense pressure. We have made sure they have a voice and can make informed choices.

Our dedicated staff and volunteers have maintained our core services giving advice and information to those contacting our service on what can be any issue relating to illness and disability. They have dealt with 7158 contacts this year giving help and advice on issues including benefits, equipment, holidays, Social Care, volunteering and many more. People have also continued to be able to access the services of our volunteer solicitor at difficult times for them.

We have helped to generate £2,242403 into the District this year by helping 428 people to maximise their income through the receipt of welfare benefits.

Our eleven volunteers have given over 2550 hours of their time to help people who contacted DIAL this year. Their commitment is second to none.

We have helped 204 people with practical help with their benefit appeals and challenges. A further 178 people have been provided with appropriate information and help packs to help them with revisions and appeals. Our success rate with appeals at 87% this year is well above the 59% national average.

We have had excellent feedback from the people we have helped as indicated in their comments to us. When asked how DIAL made them feel they said

* Absolutely wonderful.
* Absolutely brilliant.
* Big Help.
* Very helpful. Made to feel at ease and confident.
* Comfortable. Absolutely at ease. Everything explained in detail.

When asked what difference our help has made to their health, happiness or wellbeing they said

* Totally happy. Secured and settled for the future.
* Everything brilliant. I needed the PIP for my car.
* It has made a difference. If I had done it I would not have managed it.
* Feel calmer and less worried.
* A weight off my shoulders.

We have recruited and trained additional volunteers from our communities again this year.

Social Work teams, Rethink mental health workers, Richmond Fellowship Community workers, WDH Cashwise team, Citizens Advice all continue to refer people to our services.

Staff and volunteers continue to attend a number of events and networking opportunities to raise awareness of our services.

We have provided training on disability and sickness benefit procedures to a number of other organisations this year.

Our continence shop, short term wheelchair hire and NKS toilet key sale services continue for the benefit of people who need them.

As we have yet again provided a service that is very good value to our communities DIAL continues to be funded for a year by WMDC and NHS Wakefield.

**Future development:**

We continue to pursue appropriate funding to maintain our services and consider very carefully future service needs.

In future DIAL aims are:-

* To maintain core services.
* Encourage and further develop partnership working in the District.
* Continue to provide one to one support for people to challenge adverse benefit decisions.
* Continue to increase awareness of DIAL.

This year has seen a significant increase in the need for help from people who still suffer the effects of austerity. DIALs determination to offer appropriate support to many people with our simple, cost effective approach has meant that many have been reached who without our advice and information and specialist help would have been lost and unsupported.