

# General Help Providers – the end of the line?

## The Age Concern Perspective

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General Help Providers – the end of the line?

# Background

The following analysis of the Age Concern Position is based on:

- Research into the funding situation of local Age Concerns – surveys completed in early 2006 and Summer/Autumn 2007
- Research that informed the ACE report ‘Transforming Lives - Tackling Poverty and Promoting Independence and Dignity through Information and Advice’



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# The Age Concern I&A Network

- Approximately 150 – 175 local ACs have an I&A service
- 88% provide Generalist Advice, 82% Generalist Advice with case work
- Areas of work – welfare benefits, health and social care, housing and finding help at home, consumer, etc.



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# The Age Concern I&A Network

- Average 3.7 paid staff (mainly part time) and 6.4 volunteers. The largest services have up to 15 staff and 120 volunteers.
- The large majority have CLS Quality Mark at either General Help or GH with Case Work.
- Services tend to be a mix of telephone and community based with home visits being a core element of most local AC I&A services.



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# The Age Concern I&A Network

Local AC I&A client:

- 62% female
- 47% over 80, 35% in their 70s, 15% in their 60s
- 89% have disabilities or health problems which affect their daily lives. Most had multiple chronic health conditions which are unlikely to improve.



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# Value of Age Concern I&A

- Local ACs claimed over £100 million in benefits in 07/08
- 38.1% received additional benefits of £60 - £69 per week
- 17.2% received over £100 in additional weekly benefits
- 56% of people used the money to pay for practical help from cleaners and gardeners



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# Value of Age Concern I&A

- 27% on household repairs and decorations
- 18% on household health related adaptations
- 24% on paying for care services
- 46% spent the money on additional heating
- 40% on additional food
- 18% on items such as shoes and clothes



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# Current Funding of AC I&A Services

- From the survey conducted in early 2006 there was a dire prediction that up to half our paid I&A staff could be lost within 3 years.
- The late 2007 survey suggests that the position is not that bad. A number of AC I&A services have closed and many others have lost some staff but overall staffing levels across the network appear to be similar.
- Increase in the number of ACs receiving funding from local authorities and PCTs.



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# Current Funding of AC I&A Services

- Funding from charitable funds largely remained static but expecting to see problems when current Big Lottery funded projects end.
- Core funding has reduced significantly – may reflect number of ACs that were subsidising services but have lost main external funding and have now stopped providing I&A.
- Increase in number of ACs core funding entire I&A services with one staff member.



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# LSC Policy and AC I&A Services

## CLACs, CLANs and Advice Networks

- Only 32% of ACs are active members of a CLSP or similar partnership.
- 26% of ACs (surveyed) were aware that a CLAC, CLAN or formal Advice Network was being planned in their area.
- In the main ACs have either been excluded or excluded themselves from planning/partnerships/delivery.



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# LSC Policy and AC I&A Services

## Quality Mark

- Over 180 AC I&A services are QM'd (80% have General Help or GH with Case Work)
- Generally considered to have been beneficial by ACs and key in securing funding and demonstrating the quality/legitimacy/professionalism of AC I&A services.
- Lack of auditing has lead to ambivalence towards QM and quality measures from ACs.



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# LSC Policy and AC I&A Services

## Concerns

- LSC policy is causing/compounding a separation between AC I&A and mainstream legal advice providers.
- Will this undermine the work of AC I&A services – not recognised as an ‘advice provider’.
- Restrict AC access to advice funding.



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# The Future of AC I&A Provision

- How are we going to fund welfare benefit take up work/core I&A services?
- Local AC I&A diversifying into 'new' areas of advice – financial literacy/money advice (Thoreson), discrimination advice (Age Discrimination legislation, EHRC), employment related IAG
- Development of 'none traditional I&A' related services – care brokerage, information prescriptions, advocacy services



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# The Future of AC I&A Provision

- In the mid to long term AC may become estranged from mainstream advice provision delivering services that are not seen as being part of traditional advice.
- In the short term more AC I&A services will close or reduce as LA and PCT tendering develops, Big Lottery funding ends and pressure increases on using core funds and reserves.



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