



disability nottinghamshire

Charity Number: 1131621

Registered in England: 6972820

Annual Report of Disability Nottinghamshire

1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017

“Rebuilt my confidence in social issues and also work based issues. Makes me more committed to completing tasks.” - service user

Supported by





Contents

Chairman's foreword	4
Staff reports	11
People are at the centre of everything we do	17
Statistics	18
A big thank you to our funders	23

Please note the following are incorporated in the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2017

- **Administrative Information**
- **Structure, Governance, and Management**
- **Objectives and Activities for Public Benefit**
- **Achievements and Performance**
- **Financial Review**
- **Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees**



Chairman's statement for the year ending 31 March 2017

Welcome to the annual report of Disability Nottinghamshire, which I am pleased and privileged to present.

It's been another challenging but fulfilling year, set against a background of further Welfare and Pensions reform, and in addition the continuing issues related employment, housing, poverty and changes to health and social care delivery. The impact of this is reflected in the lives of disabled people, their families, friends and carers who use our services across Nottinghamshire.

Therefore, I am very pleased to report that even with the funding pressures the Charity faced throughout the year, it has continued to be focused on providing a diverse range of quality information, advice and support services across the County of Nottinghamshire.



We try to make it easy to access this advice and support, via telephone help line, outreach surgeries in local communities e.g. doctors surgeries, libraries, plus face to face appointments, drop in services, workshops and peer mentoring. This is supporting people within our area of activity to exercise greater choice, control and independence in their daily life.

As an active volunteer myself in the charity, I am always struck by the commitment and passion of my volunteer colleagues and the small number of staff the charity employs (equivalent of 3.50 full time posts). Staff are employed on fixed term grant funded projects.

Currently we have 25 active volunteers who have contributed over 4,000 hours to the charity at a monetary value of £56,000 over the year.



The service could not run without volunteers who are recruited from local communities. I am full of admiration for the work they undertake and it is clear to me that Disability Nottinghamshire is unique, holding a special place in the life of the community we represent within Nottinghamshire.

As a user led charity, we have continued to encourage the user led ethos both within our own organisation and to assist for example, individuals, small self-help groups and single issue groups to feel more confident and become better informed to both challenge and influence policy.

Alongside Nottinghamshire County Council we continue to support the work of the Disability Independent Advisory Group. This is an independent voice within the community and tackles a range of issues raised by members.

Our own services are continuing to be developed using the information we receive from service user feedback, consultation group meetings and work with partners to inform this work.

There is an ever increasing demand for advice information services, and outreach community support across the County.

Overall this reporting year 3,048 people have contacted the Charity, this includes 1,200 people who have required complex case work support.

Within our core services there has been an increase of referrals from parents and carers regarding children with disabilities. We assisted 186 families with child Disability Living Allowance, a 20% increase over the previous year.

The charity has also continued to actively seek partners to deliver quality services across Nottinghamshire. We have been part of a successful partnership led by Advice Nottingham involving 18 public, voluntary and community sector organisations across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire to develop a financial inclusion project, funded by BIG Lottery and European Social Fund (D2N2).

From this we have been able to appoint to a post of a Personal Navigator (Money Management). This is supporting the most vulnerable and financially excluded people in the community with “one to one “ support helping improve their financial management and skills.



Promoting equality and tackling discrimination on behalf of our service users is also at the heart of the Charity, for example, currently as part of the D2N2 work we will be promoting Disability Awareness across the partners group. This year we have also achieved Disability confident Employee Status (period 14 October 2016 to 12 October 2018).

The Charity was successfully awarded 3 year funding from Big Lottery for the Reach Out Nottinghamshire Plus project. The project has now completed its second year and has allowed the charity to respond to the rising demand for specialist welfare benefits support, including appeals, advocacy, county wide peer support groups mentoring plus money maximisation financial and educational workshops. Providing our service users a local forum to share, learn and take proactive control over their lives.

“Our Voice” Community Choir has a growing membership and is open to all.

The aim is to unite people through music and promote wellbeing. As part of the development of the choir individual members are now taking on support roles for example, Treasurer and Secretary. In this reporting year, they have held a very successful Summer Concert, Christmas Carol Service and has been very well supported by family, friends and the wider public. The choir has also widened its activities to include singing to residents in local care homes, bringing music and fun to 66 residents.

The Choir has grown and benefited from grants, sponsorship and their own fund raising efforts. Crafty Coffee provides an inclusive environment for people to come together and undertake a variety of crafts.

It is clear that the past year has seen many achievements and we have endeavoured to operate our charity as effectively and efficiently as possible.

At a time of reduced public spending, growing concern from the public over the management of charities, the Trustee Directors of the Charity take their governance responsibilities seriously. Although they may be less visible on a day to day basis, their work is vital. They constantly endeavour to listen to service users, show clearly how the money we receive translates directly into much needed services and in supporting volunteers and staff. As Chairman I appreciate the open and honest dialogue received, and wise counsel provided by Trustee Board members.



On behalf of Disability Nottinghamshire I would also like to thank our grant aid funders, donors, and fundraisers for supporting the charity and recognising the need for the services we provide.

Going forward, as ever, securing funding will continue to be a challenge, when the majority of funding is for short term projects, it does make life interesting.

Recruitment training and support of our volunteers who are the back bone of the Charity will be a high priority. We will also be consulting on the development of our next 3 year Strategic plan 2018-2021.

No doubt all connected to the Charity will continue the work, fuelled by enthusiasm, a desire to support the community, endless cups of tea and coffee and good will.

For, and on behalf of, the Trustee Directors.



L Carter

Chairman



Events

The following pictures show examples of the type of activities the charity is involved in:

RON + information event



Simon Mee delivering information about changes to benefits at our Kirkby information event attended by 28 local residents

Gary Baird giving individual advice at our Kirkby information event



Money sorted in D2N2 launch



Our voice community choir



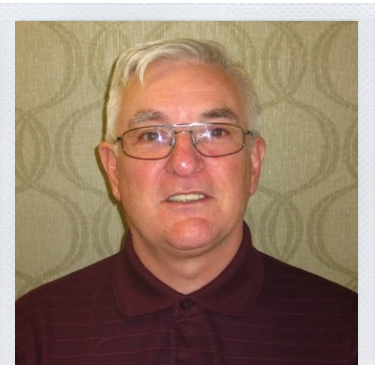
CORE Information and Advice

I would like to open to thanking our funders NCC Grant Aid to help us deliver a confidential service to people with disabilities or long term health conditions and their carers and health or social care professionals.

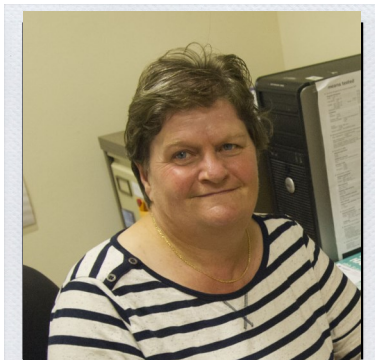
The core service has operated from Botany Avenue and Rosemary Street the annexe seeing a total of over 1,600 clients helping with any benefit advice, accessible holidays, form filling and helping with appeals. We have assisted people claim their correct benefits averaging over £1,650 pounds annually.

All our volunteers and staff have regular training to keep within the guidelines of legislation.

We have a team that works tirelessly and effortlessly to maintain the level of advice given to our clients. We would like to give a big thankyou to all of our volunteers who without them would not be able to carry on delivering our service.



Ivan Smith



Michelle Baird



Reach Out Nottinghamshire Plus (RON+)

The RON+ project is funded by the National Lottery.

The project aims to support disabled people and their carers living in the county of Nottinghamshire with the exception of the city. It aims to enable people to have better chances in life by avoiding financial exclusion and improving life opportunities and an improvement of general health. The project aims to assist participants to take control of their lives and give them the tools to possibly reduce reliance on welfare benefits support.

We are achieving this by offering a holistic and practical approach to the difficulties our clients are currently encountering, we offer a package of dual support we deliver a comprehensive benefits advice service to people, combined with a varied package of peer support programs.

During the reporting period we have achieved the following:

The RON + benefits team has dealt with 429 people who between them have contacted us 1366 times during this reporting period most enquiries being benefit related this represents an increase of approximately 15% and 31% respectively. We have realised an actual gain of £794,873 in welfare benefit payments for our service users and an estimated gain of £228,409 in further as yet unconfirmed benefit, this represents an increase in benefit gains of: 60% actual and 75% estimated (approx.) on last year's figures.



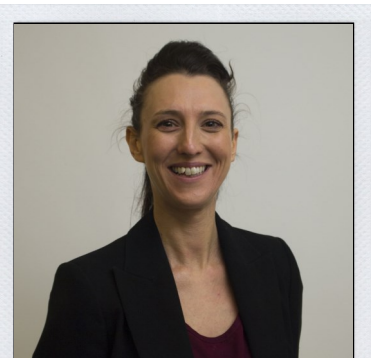
Gary Baird



Simon Mee



Claire Staples



Leah Hill



As the migration of current Disability Living Allowance recipients to Personal Independence Payment gathers pace we have seen an increasing number of people who have not been successful in their claims, this has created stress and anxiety for them, we endeavour to alleviate some of these anxieties by continuing to offer a fully enhanced and proactive and supportive service despite the fact that we have seen an increase of both numbers and complexities of cases.

Currently we have outreaches in Newark, Retford, Church Warsop and Ollerton.

Over the past 12 months we have delivered Peer Support Groups sessions and established regular groups in Mansfield and Mansfield Woodhouse in the following categories ~

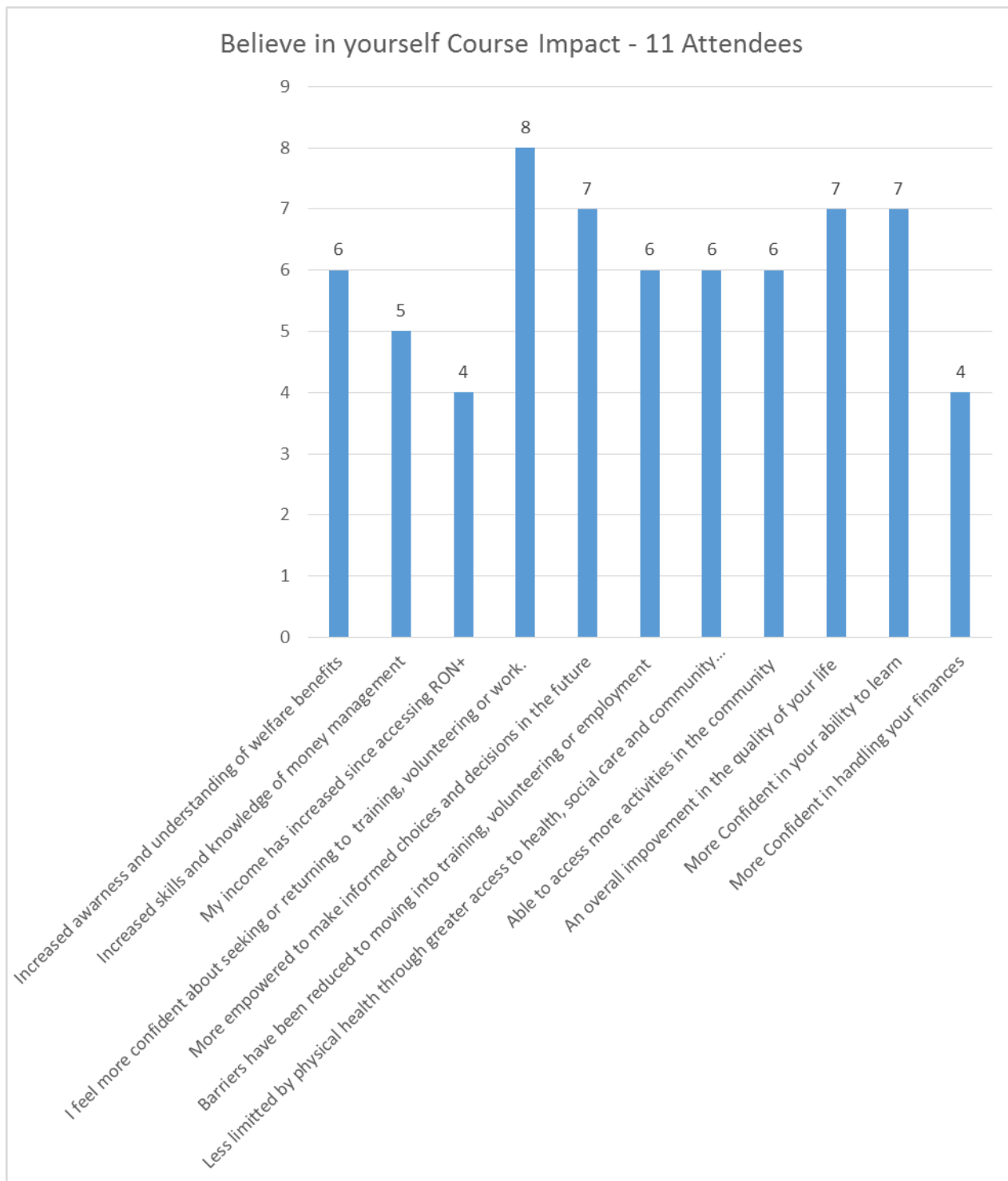
- Overcoming Anxiety & Building Confidence
- Achieve – Knowing Me, Knowing You
- Build Your Self Esteem & Confidence
- Mindfulness
- Employability Skills
- Jewellery Making
- Patchwork Quilting
- Crafts
- Have Your Say
- Take Charge
- Introduction to Minute Taking
- Job Centre Plus Outreach Peer Support sessions
- Believe in Yourself

These sessions have helped people with long term health conditions and disabilities to overcome anxieties, build confidence, heighten their self-esteem and achieve their desired outcomes in areas they didn't before think were possible.

Participants have been able to move on to additional groups and have the confidence to now try out different sessions.



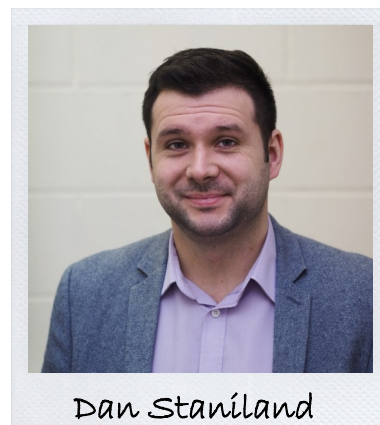
Please find the table below as an example of the difference these courses make to people lives.



D2N2 Money Sorted

Money Sorted in D2N2 is a financial inclusion project funded jointly by The Big Lottery and The European Social Fund.

The project aims to improve the situation of those who are economically inactive or registered unemployed by providing them with tools to improve their financial capabilities, access products that can make money management easier, improve their incomes and reduce outgoings. Disability Nottinghamshire are a partner and have a Personal Navigator (Money Advisor) in post with the remit of focussing on those with disabilities or long term health conditions who want to improve their financial situations.



The Project went Live on 16 January 2017 and is scheduled to run until September 2019.

During the lifetime of the project it is projected that 152 participants will enrol and receive help to improve their circumstances. During the period of this report the Personal Navigator had signed up 10 participants and steps had been taken to help them improve their financial skills and increase their surplus incomes.

The project aims to assist participants from all over Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and Disability Nottinghamshire have been given the task of focussing on signing up participants from Mansfield, Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood and Gedling.

Steps have been taken to forge links with Jobcentre Plus, Inspire learning, Adult Education Centres, Local Authorities and Advice agencies to promote the project and engineer referral pathways.



Our Voice community choir

“Our Voice” Community Choir unites people through music and showcases and promotes the potential of people with disabilities, raising public awareness of the skills and abilities of people with disabilities, increasing social capital within local communities, and supporting the development of stronger social networks. The choir is inclusive regardless of ability and open anyone who has a disability, long term health condition, their carers, family, friends and professionals living in Mansfield and the surrounding areas. Participants work towards a performances and celebration events which showcase to the wider community the potential skills and abilities of people with disabilities.

The choir has worked with Care homes across Mansfield to bring musical performances to care home residents who otherwise would not have had the opportunity to attend a performance. We will continue to work with the care homes and are planning more performances in the upcoming months. We are working One Walk Mansfield to perform as part of Learning Disability Week, we have delivered a Christmas celebration in partnership with Mansfield Baptist Church to deliver a Christmas celebration event. We work closely with Mansfield JCP to support people to access the choir. We have developed links with community mental health team and occupational health in order to support their clients to access the choir.

The choir would like to thank their funders and supporters for their continued help and over the past 12 months are working towards being more self sustained.

“ I feel I can have my voice heard in a safe an non judgmental environment”

“The choir has given me something to get up for, A Purpose”

“I have increased confidence and self-belief”

“Friends and Family have said to me they have noticed a difference in me since starting choir, it is very therapeutic, fun and brings out my confidence”



“Being Part of the choir has given me a purpose, it has brought me out of my shell and pushed me to try things I never thought I could”

“I Have meet so many wonderful people who have made me feel special for who I am and not my disability”

“It has given be the opportunity to become sociable after feeling isolated after illness and feel safe”

Support activities—encouraging user led activity

Crafty coffee runs every Tuesday 10.30 – 12.30 at St Johns in Mansfield. Attendees make a variety of different craft projects from sets & kits or follow patterns and instructions from books and samples. Whilst this group was started by Disability Nottinghamshire, it is now mainly self run by it’s users and is thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Jewellery Making is held at Park Road Resource Centre every Monday 11am – 1pm this course is run by West Nottinghamshire College, the group involves making earrings, necklaces and bracelets using different materials and techniques.

Patchwork quilting is held at St Johns and is also run by West Notts College, attendees meet every Friday 1pm - 3pm.

We have received fantastic feedback on all courses we have provided over the past year.



People are at the centre of everything we do

I understand the ESA assessment system, the advisor didn't judge me and made me feel relaxed, I didn't become anxious. My benefit has now been obtained and I am very happy.

Very professional and I really appreciate what has happened for me so far. Still awaiting for a tribunal appointment but I am returning to work with restrictions.

Helped and assisted me with my appeal at a time when I was at a very low point.



I am now looking for work and joining the choir. Life seems to be looking up for me.

I feel let down by the government. You have supported me, I was awarded PIP enhanced rate care and standard mobility as well as ESA. I really appreciate your call, it shows that we are not just forgotten about.

Increased confidence and highlighted strengths which will improve employment prospects and voluntary opportunities. I am feeling more hopeful than I have in a long time.



Case Studies

Service user Miss 'A' had suffered with poor mental health from being a teenager. She applied for Employment and Support Allowance and Personal Independence Payment and received assistance from Disability Nottinghamshire with health questionnaires for both benefits.

She was awarded Employment and Support Allowance and placed in the support group, the group reserved for people who are unlikely to be able to return to work in the medium to long term.

She was refused any award of Personal Independence Payment and Disability Nottinghamshire assisted her to lodge a mandatory reconsideration. The Department for Work and Pensions did not change the decision and we assisted her to lodge an appeal.

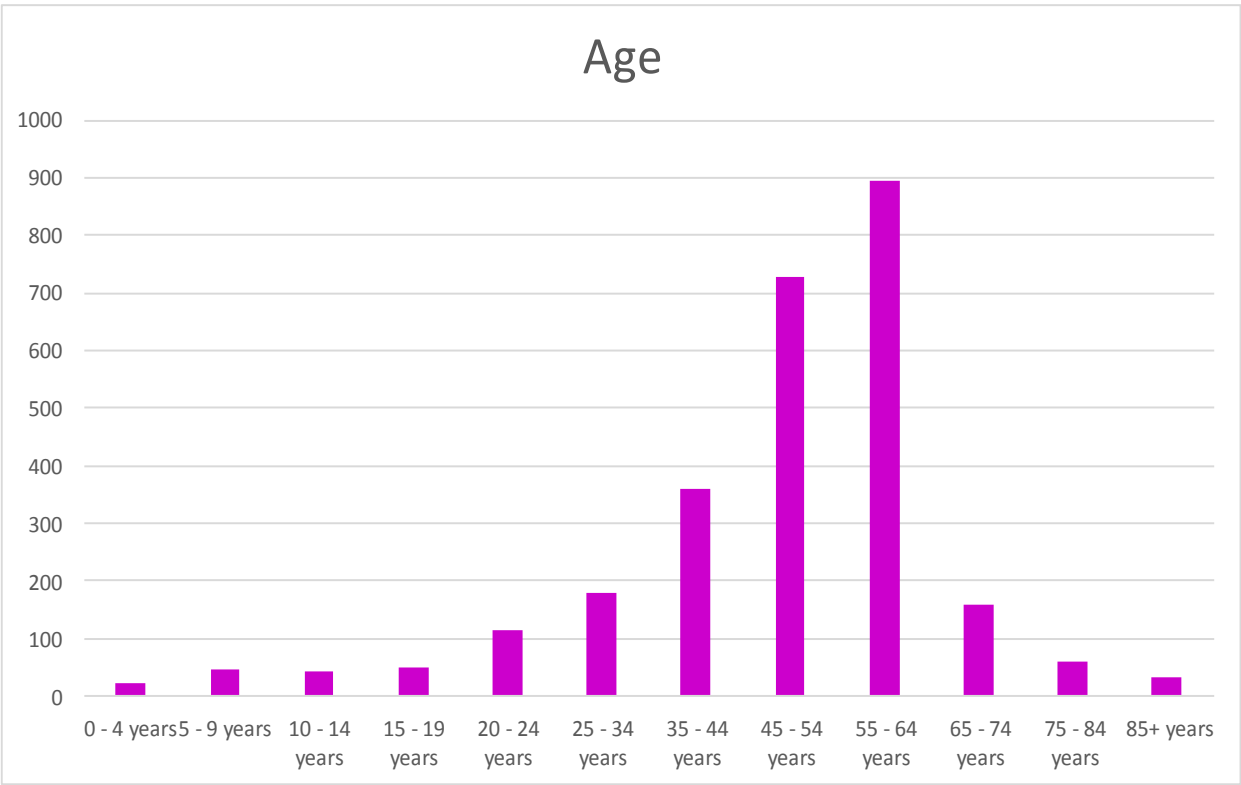
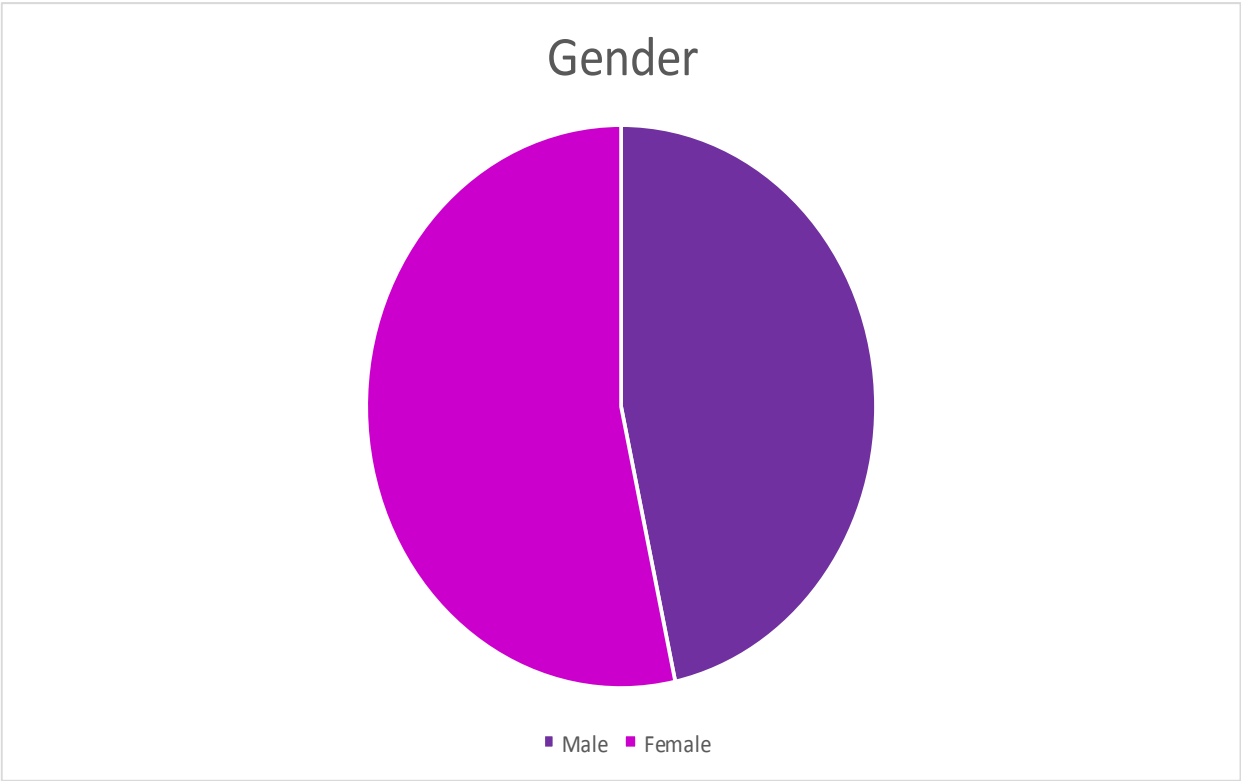
Her appeal was successful and she was awarded the enhanced rate of the daily living component some 15 months after her initial claim. Without the continued assistance from Disability Nottinghamshire she would not have been successful

Service user Mr 'B' contacted Disability Nottinghamshire for advice following a stroke. We provided him advice as to his benefit entitlement and assisted him with his claims.

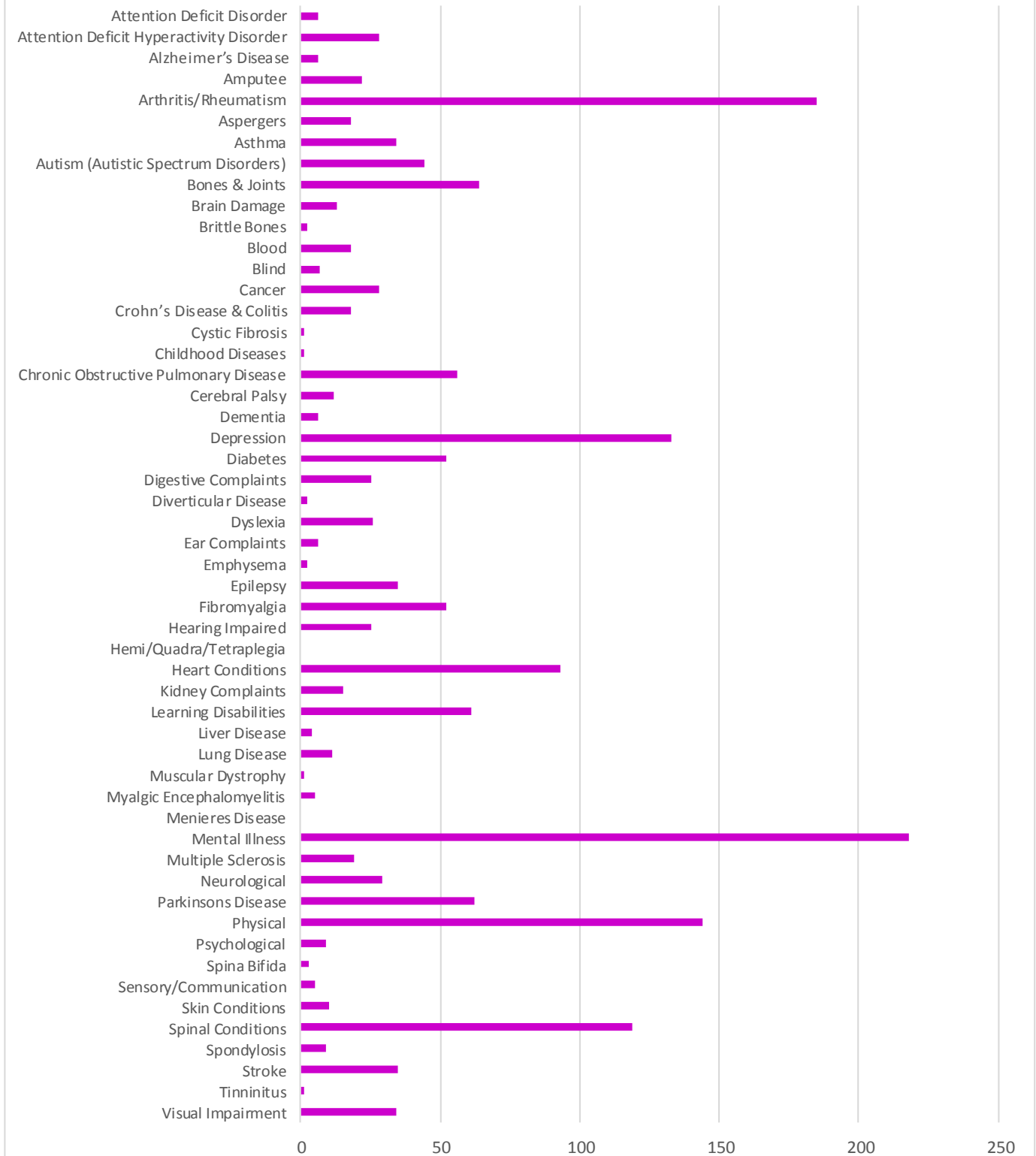
He expressed an interest in advice and volunteered for us as an adviser. He has now left us as he has returned to work. We wish him all the best



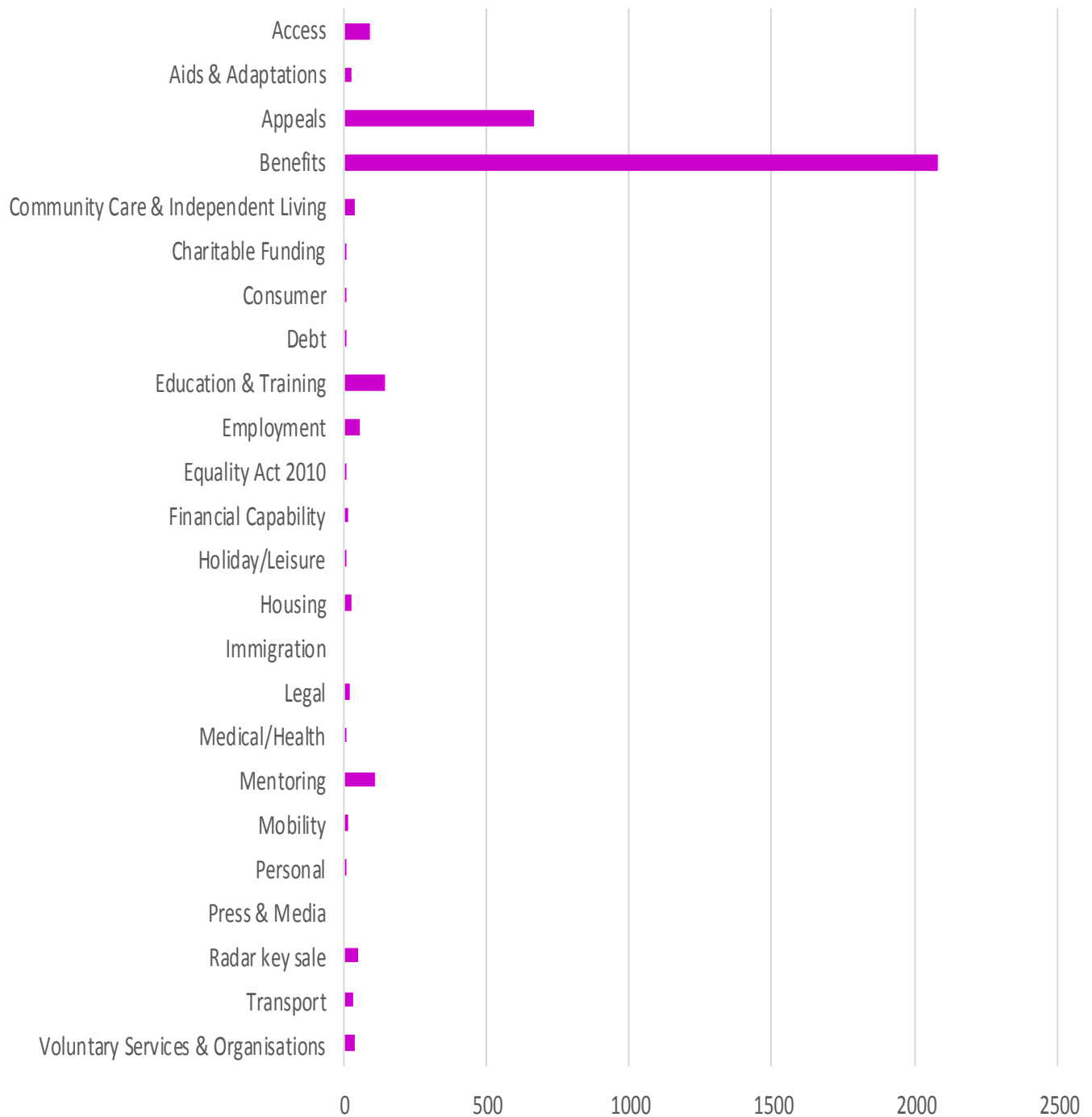
Statistics: April 2016 - March 2017



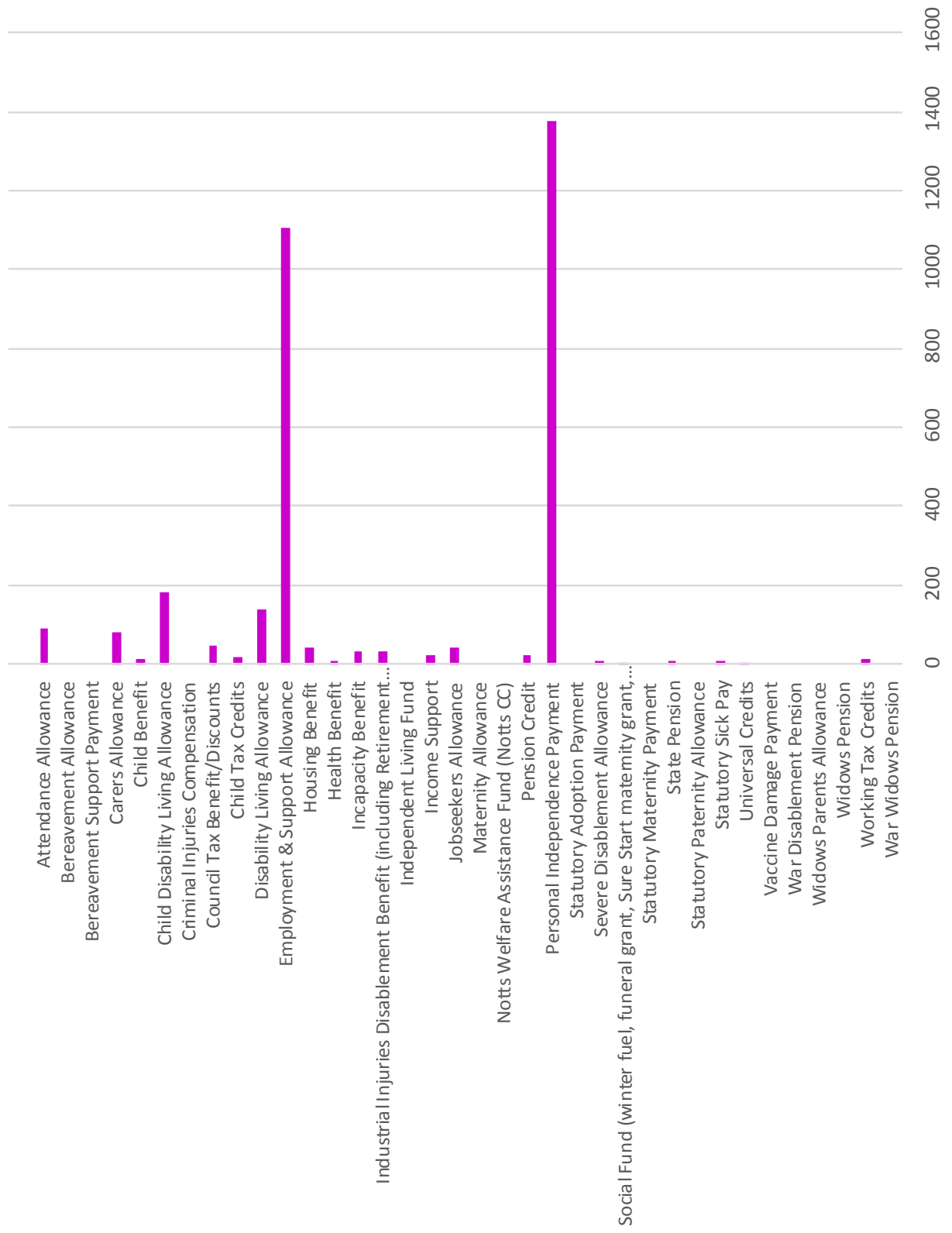
Disabilities



Reason for contacting Disability Nottinghamshire



Benefit Enquiries



A big thank you to all our funders

- Big Lottery Fund
- CAF charities nationwide community match
- Lloyds Charity Trust
- Mary Potter Convent Hospital Trust
- Midland legal support trust
- National Lottery and European Social Fund
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- Our voice community choir
- Sir John Eastwood foundation
- Tesco Charity Trust
- Andy Timmons
- Jayne Roe
- *And everyone who gave us donations or raised funds for the charity*





**Park Road Resource Centre
53 Park Road
Mansfield Woodhouse
Nottinghamshire
NG19 8ER**

Advice Line: 01623 625 891

Admin/Office: 01623 658 060

