

Report of activity for Garfield Weston Foundation

January to December 2023

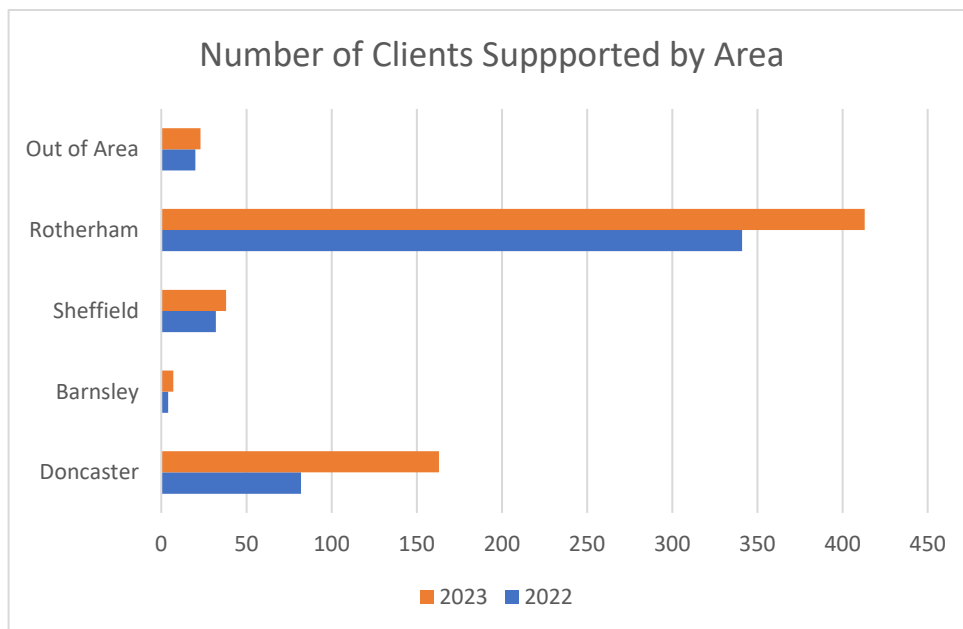
This brief report summarises the outcomes Active Independence has achieved as a result of the £5000 grant received from the Garfield Weston Foundation. The funding was to support our core costs during a period of rapidly increasing growth in demand for our services.

The grant has contributed to us been able to continue to provide and expand our support to disabled people, PAs and their carers in South Yorkshire and surrounding areas. Between January – December 2023 we have supported **1005** people, across all services,.

Highlights

Advocacy Service

During this past year, we have been faced with an overwhelming demand for specialist Advocacy support. This has either been via clients contacting us themselves or referrals from health and voluntary sector workers. In particular there has demand in the Doncaster area as key local Voluntary sector organisations had stopped providing benefits support and so signposted clients onto our organisation.



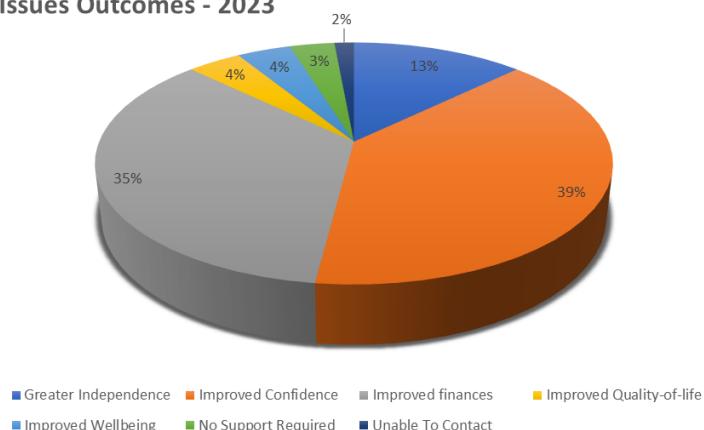
We are so very pleased and thank you for all you have done for us. Thanks to your hard work, we now get Attendance Allowance High Rate for myself, Low Rate for my wife, pension credit and Council Tax Reduction. You have changed our lives after sitting in own coats all last winter.

Between 1 Jan – 31st Dec 2023, we advocated for **664** clients with **1220** different issues. Compared s 479 clients with 778 issues the previous year.

This reporting period we have raised **£1,532,796** in welfare entitlements.

If it wasn't for my advocate I wouldn't be here today. [They supported me throughout from completing PIP form, MR and at my Tribunal, where the initial decision was overturned]. My advocate was amazing and their knowledge of the tribunal process made it accessible for me

Issues Outcomes - 2023



Art of Wellbeing Service

We have experienced an increase in the demand for our Art of Wellbeing Services. In 2023 we had 210 member attending sessions compared with 74 member attending sessions the previous year. We have run a number of day trips on a Community Barge, Archery Session and trips to local garden centres.

Fabulous morning with fabulous people, we loved it, thank you so much

PA Support Service

We have experienced a drop in number of PAs accessing our PA Service from 195 in 2022 to 131 in 2023 due in most part to recruitment difficulties across the care sector. We were able to find additional funding to run PA workshops and update our Being A PA online and classroom-based training programme.

What have we learned

- Managing new referrals from organisations now referring to us taken additional time, a new referral form and managing their expectations.
- New spot purchase contract from Crossroads Care proved VCS partners can support each other on behalf of clients. Unfortunately this is the exception and we are working to build trust and relationships with other organisations to recognise the need for funding to follow the client or groups like us will implode.
- Feedback tells us we have an excellent reputation across the region for providing high quality specialist services but this creates additional demands and pressures
- All staff, including CEO, have a case load so increasing clients has resulted in less time on other critical tasks such as funding.

Any Changes in Organisation / Work

- Senior manager became salaried (from being freelance) so all 5 staff now salaried with 2 sessional group workers.
- Restructured staff structure to reflect responsibilities of their role plus all staff given additional hours to cope with demand.
- Issues supporting client with becoming more complex as a result of cost-of-living crisis resulting in deteriorating physical and mental health and worsening finances.