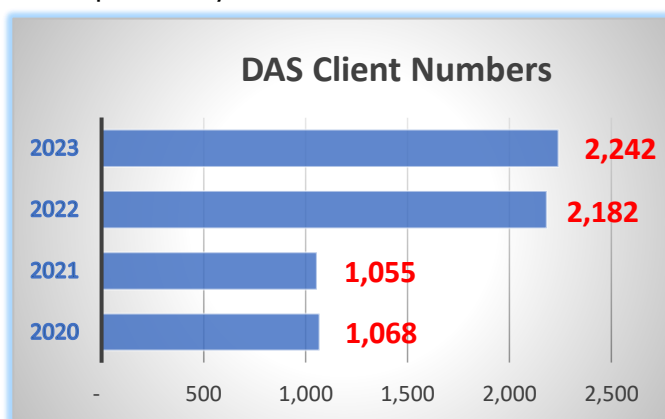


Disability Advice Service (East Suffolk)

Based in Martlesham Heath, we have been working across the former Suffolk Coastal area, from Leiston to Felixstowe, for nearly 40 years with about 15% of our clients living in Ipswich. We provide a range of practical solutions to address the short and long-term financial issues that underlie or worsen our disabled clients' well-being.

Our vision is to build confidence and self-esteem in our beneficiaries and to reach all those who can benefit from our work. Our mission is to improve the lives of those with disability and help them gain the same rights and quality of life opportunities as others. In the past four years we have:

- advised 6,547 clients who collectively generated 41,374 enquiries (73% of these coming to us in the last two years);
- advocated and won in 219 out of 220 appeal cases;
- achieved £9,778,694 in Year 1 benefit gain (£30,705,000 when measured across the full award which averages over three years); and
- helped 925 clients through their crisis of absolute poverty distributing £60,000 in individual hardship grants.



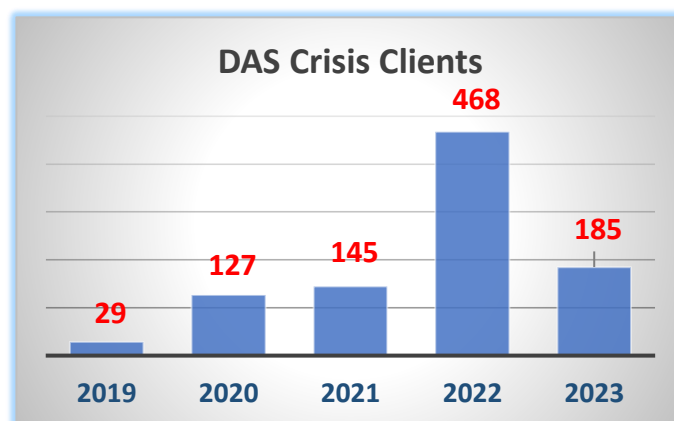
We also advise on many other matters including blue parking badges, energy relief schemes and tariffs, council tax and water rates relief schemes, Local Welfare Assistance Scheme, RADAR keys and Pension Credit eligibility as well as signposting on other relevant issues such as housing rights; adaptations to the home; and accessible transport and leisure. The service has become increasingly wide-ranging in recent times reflected by increased numbers of enquiries pursued per client from 4 to 7 over the last 3yrs.

Providing value for money

For every £1 donated to running DAS, the return in client monetary benefit is £10-30.

Help in a crisis

The need for DAS is arguably at its most critical where the disproportionate impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the disabled has pushed a much higher number into extreme poverty. Even after the 2022 peak, our crisis intervention service continues to help over 6x the number of clients compared to pre-pandemic levels. In most cases these clients are suffering from some degree of mental ill-health exacerbating existing conditions. Our Crisis Service covers a broad range of support from food bank supplies and subsistence payments through to a full background check on personal finances and benefits covering the core areas to ensure clients are receiving their full entitlements. As a "Trusted Partner" of Suffolk Community Foundation during 2022-23 we distributed over £60,000 in individual hardship grants to these clients from the Household Support Fund.



Impact on Loneliness and Isolation

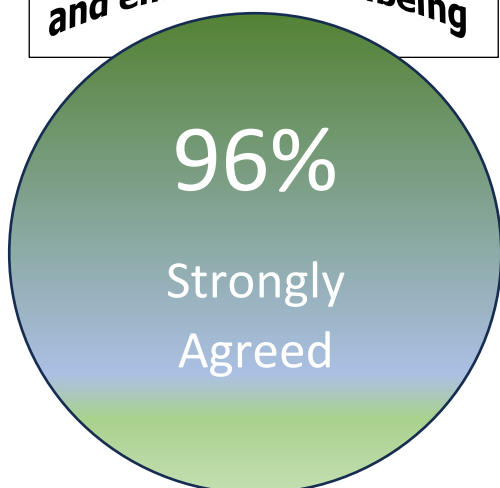
Disabled people are worst off in terms of opportunities for social interaction and are subject more than others to the downside of isolation. We set up our Listening Service in response to the pandemic when a call from a friendly voice giving reassurance we were still there to help was so welcomed by our clients. In fact, it was so appreciated that we decided to keep it running. Mainly staffed by volunteers, we average 1,000 contacts a year.

Impact on Well-being

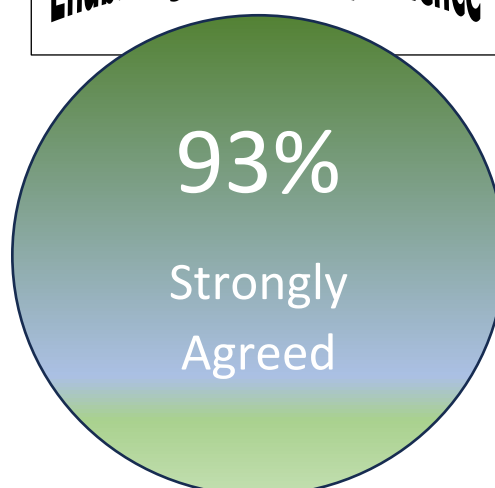
As well as the achievements described above, we also monitor the benefit to our clients' well-being from their interaction with the service. Unsurprisingly, research confirms that improving someone's financial position has a measurable impact on their well-being and this is confirmed by the results from our rolling Future Well-being Survey:



**Improved physical health
and emotional wellbeing**



Enabled greater independence



Impact on suicide prevention

The loss, or reduction, of a disabled person's welfare benefits is the most significant factor in driving them into absolute/extreme poverty and worse. In this important context, our work has a beneficial impact in attenuating the malnutrition, unnecessary deaths and suicides that result, and our work has been endorsed by Dr Daniel Poulter, MP, also a medic with a special interest in mental health.

Case study of prevention

The father of a family of 4 had a PIP application refused twice when he came to us. We completed a new application, but while waiting for a DWP decision, the family were having to live on a small amount of Universal Credit and were really struggling. After a full financial and benefit check by our Duty Team, the Crisis Team stepped in to help the family with an immediate £500 in Tesco supermarket vouchers over a 5-week period. This ensured they could get food as well as nappies, wipes, and formula for their new baby. We helped with their energy bill to ensure they could keep their home warm, obviously with the new baby in mind. The father was eventually awarded enhanced rate PIP as a result of our submission with a retrospective payment of £4,000. We ended our crisis work with the family as they were more financially stable with their positive PIP outcome.