

Prevention in Practice: Tackling the Issues That Contribute to Poor Health

This month, we start our new Macmillan 'Money and More' work, providing financial and practical help to people living with cancer and their caregivers.

Alongside this, we support clients through a range of other projects linked to health services - offering advice at key points in people's health journey, when they are most at risk. Here, we explore the impact and value of this preventative work.



“

Bea was referred to us for a benefit check while receiving end-of-life care. She was entitled to a higher rate of Disability Living Allowance under Special Rules, but was not receiving it. We secured the correct award and backdated payment, ensuring her finances better reflected her needs at a critical time.

During this work, it became clear her son - who was caring for her - was struggling with his own mental health and the pressure of managing both care and work-related requirements.

We supported him to access the Carer's Element of Universal Credit and successfully challenge a previous decision, restoring the support he needed.

Without this intervention, both Bea and her son would have remained under significant strain - highlighting the need for early, joined-up advice during critical moments.

”

Our **Macmillan Caring Locally** service, based in Christchurch, supports people with advanced or long-term conditions and older adults, with 83% reporting disability or long-term health issues. **This work has secured £1.2 million in financial gains for local people over a 6-year period.**

Early intervention around benefits, council tax and family support helped **prevent escalation into crisis, supported independent living, and reduced reliance on GP appointments** and community services for issues rooted in financial or practical barriers rather than clinical need.

How does this work improve health outcomes?

When someone is worried about money, housing or benefits, their health is often affected. Their recovery can be delayed and they are more likely to need repeated appointments or crisis support. Health services are under pressure, but many of the causes sit outside healthcare:

“

Dave has lived with bipolar disorder for over 30 years and has been admitted to St Ann's Hospital many times. Following a benefits review, his Personal Independence Payment (PIP) was reduced after he described himself as coping during a short period of stability. This decision did not reflect the reality of his condition.

The loss of income increased financial pressure and contributed to a decline in his mental health, resulting in another hospital admission.

We worked closely with Dave and his medical team to show the full, fluctuating impact of his illness. By gathering detailed clinical evidence, we challenged the decision and ensured his situation was properly understood.

Without this support, Dave's situation would have spiralled - putting further strain on both his health and local services.

”

Our work at **St. Ann's hospital** delivers specialist welfare advice to people with severe and enduring mental ill health. The project has secured **£861,007** in financial gain for clients over the past 6 years, by **addressing benefit, debt and housing issues alongside clinical care.**

Our intervention helps **stabilise** people during and following hospital contact, **reducing the likelihood of financial stressors exacerbating health crises, and repeat presentations to crisis services.**

Poor health and deprivation are interconnected, often driving and reinforcing one another. We know that early advice makes a difference: reducing stress, improving financial stability, and supporting better health outcomes.

Access to this support is not always consistent, meaning some people do not get help at the right time. By making specialist advice part of healthcare settings, we can reach people earlier, improve outcomes, and reduce pressure on services, while helping to address health inequalities.