



Annual Report 2025



**Passionate
about
possibilities.**

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A Message From Our Chief Executive Officer

This year marked a monumental milestone for DIAL as we celebrated four decades of service. Looking back at our journey since 1985, I am struck not just by how much we have grown, but by the enduring spirit of our community. What began as a local vision has blossomed into a movement of empowerment, and this past year has been a testament to that legacy.

2025 was defined by more than just statistics and targets. It was defined by connection. In an increasingly complex world, we have remained a steady hand for those navigating their way through challenges. Whether through securing vital financial stability for families, providing a listening ear during times of isolation, or opening new doors to education and volunteering, our vision remains the same: a community that is truly inclusive.

This year, we saw our reach extend further than ever before. We didn't just provide advice, we provided peace of mind. By helping our residents access the support they need, we have reinvested millions of pounds back into the health and well-being of our local community. Our new initiatives, such as Shared Steps, have proven that we are stronger when we walk together, fostering a sense of belonging that transcends traditional support services.

None of this would be possible without our people. To our dedicated staff, our passionate trustees and volunteers who give so freely of their time, and our partners who believe in our vision - thank you. You are the heartbeat of DIAL. As we look toward to the next forty years, we aren't just looking to maintain the status quo. We are looking to innovate, to advocate, and to inspire. We remain passionate about possibilities, and we are committed to building a future where every individual is valued, heard, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Thank you for being part of our story. The best is yet to come.



Sharon Brown

A Message From Our Chair of Trustees

I'm proud to welcome you to our Annual Report for 2025. In reading the report, I'm always moved by what disabled people, their carers and families say about the difference DIAL has made to their lives. DIAL's success in the Advice Quality Standard Audit in Autumn 2025 certainly provided us with confirmation that we're on the right track. The support of the Lloyds Bank Foundation has also helped DIAL to become clearer about what it needs as an organisation to provide this support.



Ian Turner





Of course, the most significant event of the year was DIAL's 40th Birthday Party, which also celebrated 40 years' service by our CEO, Sharon Brown. I'm very grateful to the Mayor of Barnsley, Councillor Dave Leech, for joining us at the event at the Lightbox, and it was great to see so many partner agencies represented there. But the most important people at the event were our staff and volunteers, who make DIAL what it is, many of whom made wonderful contributions to the art competition. Special thanks go to Nicola Walker and Emma Race for making sure everything ran smoothly on the day.

2025 hasn't been without its challenges. As funders see their resources becoming increasingly stretched, bidding for contracts and grants is tougher as competition becomes more intense. However, DIAL's close connection to its community is a considerable strength in these circumstances, something that is recognised by many funders, and of which I am immensely proud.

The trustees continue to work well together and with senior staff. Our meetings always seem to throw up interesting ideas and perspectives that hopefully provide Sharon and the team with the support they need.

About DIAL

Our Aims

-  To improve access to information, advice and guidance so disabled people, their families and carers have increased understanding and are better informed to make choices
-  To increase access to opportunities for disabled people, their families and carers to achieve their potential
-  To reduce social isolation of disabled people, their families and carers
-  To increase the opportunities for disabled people, their families and carers to have a healthy lifestyle

Our Mission

To support and empower disabled people, their families and carers to address poverty and social exclusion and improve their health and wellbeing.

Our Vision

A community that is truly inclusive.

40

Wonderful Years of



We celebrated a major milestone this year as DIAL turned 40. To mark this special occasion, we held a celebration event and art exhibition, bringing together clients, staff, volunteers, partners, and friends of DIAL. The event also honoured Sharon's 40 year anniversary with DIAL, with the Mayor presenting her with a Scottish title to recognise her incredible dedication and long-standing service.



Being part of DIAL for the past 40 years has been one of the greatest privileges of my life. What started as a small team with a big dream has become a lifeline for many disabled people and their families. I've seen the difference we can make first-hand, and I'm incredibly proud of everything we've achieved together. This milestone is a celebration of the dedication, passion, and resilience of everyone who has been part of DIAL's journey. I can't wait to see what the future holds.

Sharon Brown, CEO





Our 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Our Advice Team were re-awarded the Advice Quality Standard for delivering excellence in advice.
- ✓ We continued to receive funding to deliver our outreach services from: Penistone Area Council, Dearne Area Council, Monk Bretton Ward Alliance, North Area Council, North East Ward Alliance, Cudworth Ward Alliance and Royston Ward Alliance.
- ✓ We successfully secured new funding from Penistone Area Council to deliver home visits for vulnerable people in Penistone.
- ✓ We continued to receive funding from the Trussell Trust to continue delivering welfare advice sessions in foodbanks across Barnsley and over the phone advice to Doncaster foodbank clients.



We supported 8,197 residents with advice and generated £8.1 million in previously unclaimed benefits.



Right from the very first conversation with the lady answering my call, I was put at ease. I was making enquiries regarding a Blue Badge to help with my limited mobility. After taking my details, she explained I'd be getting a phone call from one of the advisors, who would be able to answer any questions and guide me through the process. Excellent service. Many thanks.





Our 2025 Achievements

- ✓ We successfully secured over £300,000 worth of funding for another two years from the Energy Redress Scheme to deliver our Warm Connections and Small Measures services borough wide.
- ✓ Funding from the Three Guineas Trust to provide home visits to vulnerable people across the borough has enabled us to support 415 residents since the project launched in August 2024.
- ✓ We were awarded nearly £10,000 from the National Lottery Awards for All fund to deliver crucial Pension Credit advice to older residents across Barnsley in our Pension Credit Roadshow.



Thank you Molly for what you have done for us. You have changed my life and enabled me to enjoy the time I have left. Please thank Stefan for me. What would we old people do without people like you and DIAL?



I had a successful PIP after a mandatory reconsideration by DIAL which I had no idea how to do and would not have done this myself. I want to thank you sincerely for all you've done. It's so very much appreciated.



I would like to thank Susan from DIAL for helping my dad out with the backing for the outside wall radiator to keep the heat in his home and for the draught excluder for the kitchen door. What a wonderful woman Susan is - thank you!



My experience with DIAL was very good. I had no knowledge of DIAL before a friend told me. They were very helpful, listened to my problems and were non-judgemental. All this really helped me.





Dearne Area Outreach Case Study



Before DIAL

Mr P, in his late 20s and living alone, has Autism (ASD) and ongoing mental ill health, which had deteriorated over time. Due to his declining mental health, Mr P had been unable to work for around 6 months. Although he was receiving Universal Credit and had been placed into the Limited Capability for Work-Related Activity group, he was still struggling financially.

Advice Provided by DIAL

A friend suggested Mr P might be eligible for Personal Independence Payment (PIP). He requested an application form and received support from a DIAL Advisor at our Dearne Outreach to complete his claim, which was initially refused. Mr P returned to the outreach feeling discouraged, and our Advisor supported him to submit a Mandatory Reconsideration and explained the appeals process, providing further detail about his health conditions and daily living and mobility needs. Despite this, Mr P's Mandatory Reconsideration was also refused. Determined to help him, our Advisor supported Mr P to appeal. A few weeks later, the Department for Work and Pensions reviewed the case again and overturned their decision.

After DIAL

Without the need for a tribunal, Mr P was awarded the Standard Rate Daily Living and Standard Rate Mobility from the date of his original claim. This increased his income by £439.18 per month. This outcome was a huge relief for Mr P, who had been experiencing extreme anxiety about the thought of attending a tribunal and speaking in front of a judge. Mr P now has reduced anxiety around his finances and can have a better quality of life.



I really didn't want to have to speak at a tribunal and am very happy the DWP changed their decision. I really appreciate all the help DIAL provided.





Our 2025 Achievements

- ✓ This year, 32 Volunteers helped deliver our services. They helped on our Advice Line, supported our Advisors at outreach and foodbanks, and volunteered at events.
- ✓ Our Volunteers contributed 637 hours to DIAL.
- ✓ The value of Volunteer work is estimated at £8,727.
- ✓ We had 15 members attend Stronger Together: Shared Steps, which launched in July 2025.
- ✓ Shared Steps delivered 154 hours of engagement with clients, including 1 to 1 support, mentoring, workshops and social groups.

“

Volunteering for DIAL helped me to start my journey out of depression. It helped me connect with wonderful other people, to help people and feel needed, to feel more open, trusting and confident, and so much more

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“

To all my colleagues. Thank you all for your continued support. Thank you for welcoming me to the team. To me DIAL is my family.

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“

I am so proud to be a trustee for DIAL Barnsley and hope I can continue to make a difference for many years.

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Volunteer Case Study



Before DIAL

Lisa, a single parent and a survivor of domestic abuse, ran her own cleaning and ironing business. She was actively seeking additional work through the Jobcentre and Working Win and had previously accessed DIAL's foodbank support during periods of unemployment. Having volunteered with Resolute, she decided to apply for the Advice Engagement Volunteer role at DIAL after seeing it advertised.

Advice Provided by DIAL

Following a successful interview, DIAL put a strong support structure in place to help Lisa build confidence and move towards meaningful employment. This included induction and training (with visits to the Wombwell foodbank, and training in Welfare Benefits, Disability Awareness, GDPR and Safeguarding), regular one-to-one mentoring with the Volunteer Training and Support Officer to set clear goals, and practical and emotional support with job applications. Through her role as an Advice Engagement Volunteer at Buckley Church, Lisa developed her communication skills, boosted her self-esteem and gained valuable professional experience.

After DIAL

The support Lisa received led to significant personal and professional growth. She successfully secured two roles as a crossing patrol officer and a lunchtime supervisor at a local school, remains in both posts, and continues to volunteer for DIAL during school holidays. She has also recently applied to become a Trustee at DIAL, demonstrating the confidence she has developed.



I am fully enjoying myself at DIAL. When I first started I was very shy, but throughout the months, my confidence has grown. I used to look forward to Fridays working at the foodbank. I have not just gained confidence, but experience and friendships.



Our 2025 Achievements

2025 saw the last few months of our three social inclusion groups: Connect Together, Time Together and Stronger Together. Members from each group continue to meet, forming lasting friendships, and report feeling less isolated and more connected to their community as a result of attending.

- ✓ 56 Connect Together members enjoyed various groups and sessions, including: bingo, social clubs, Pension Credit and Winter Fuel Payment advice sessions, Active Together sessions and coffee mornings.
- ✓ 13 regular Stronger Together attendees enjoyed various groups and sessions, including: coffee mornings, stained glass painting, Carer's coffee club, Carer's bingo, Carer's support group.
- ✓ 13 regular Time Together attendees met at various locations in Barnsley, including: Locke Park Cafe, Worsbrough Community Pantry, Dunelm and Wharncliffe Community Centre.
- ✓ 14 regular Together at the Table attendees enjoyed 9 sessions that were held in the Central area, enjoying a home-cooked lunch or breakfast and activities.



The group is a magical place for me. For a couple of hours I can forget my troubles and be with friends, have a chat or do some art. It's my magical place.





Connect Together Case Study

Before DIAL

Mr P and his partner Mrs L, a couple in their late 70s and early 80s, were struggling with loneliness. Their isolation had taken a toll on their mental health, leaving them feeling low in mood and anxious. Before reaching out to DIAL, they had attended local church services but had been unable to find any groups that felt suitable for them.

Advice Provided by DIAL

Since November 2023, Mr P and Mrs L have been active and much loved members of the Connect Together group. They take part in group quizzes and activities, always bringing enthusiasm and warmth to the sessions. Mr P, in particular, is always one of the first to lend a hand, often making drinks for other group members and helping to create a welcoming environment for all.

After DIAL

Attending the group has had a hugely positive impact on Mr P and Mrs L. They have built new friendships, feel more connected, and no longer experience the same level of isolation. Their confidence and sense of belonging have grown, having had a regular social outlet that brings them joy and companionship.



Our 2025 Achievements

- ✓ We held 18 Talk & Trims sessions across Barnsley, from April to October, where 40 people received a free haircut and information about local health and wellbeing services available to them.
- ✓ Claire Davis joined our team in November as a Community Connector (Disability Sport and Physical Activity). Claire's role involves supporting disabled people in Barnsley to get more active and make new connections.
- ✓ We gave away 300 Comfort & Joy Christmas hampers to disabled people and carers in Barnsley.



I'm really enjoying my new role! I've visited some amazing organisations that deliver disabled and inclusive sessions, including The Shaw Foundation, Grass Roots, Focus 4 Vision, Barnsley FC Community Trust, the Metrodome and Horizon CC. I've also chatted to lots of disabled people about anything related to activity and moving.



Claire Davis, Community Connector





Talk & Trims Case Study



Before DIAL

John, aged 72, an older gentleman from Hoyland, attended a session at his local community centre a few months after the death of his wife. Having been married for 50 years, John found himself suddenly isolated and struggling to navigate daily life alone. He mentioned that he felt a sense of invisibility and was unsure where to turn for support with his grief and loneliness.

Advice Provided by DIAL

He came in for a haircut and spent nearly an hour chatting with Jeff (our Community Development Worker). Jeff listened without judgment, letting John share memories and talk through the immense difficulty of his recent loss. By the end of the session, John said the simple act of having a trim and an honest conversation made him feel like a person again.

After DIAL

We provided John with detailed information about local bereavement support, a walking group that meets nearby, and a direct referral pathway to DIAL Barnsley's welfare and benefits advice team to help him with his updated financial situation.



I only came for the free haircut, but I got a lot more than that. The young lad, Jeff, was brilliant. I walked in feeling heavy and left feeling a foot taller. It's a proper lifeline for men like me who just need a space to talk and not feel rushed.



Spotlight

Penistone Advice on Your Doorstep

We have supported Penistone residents with advice, information and guidance for over ten years through our Community Outreach sessions. At the end of 2024, we secured additional funding from Penistone Area Council to launch a new advice at home project, which launched in early 2025. This means we can now visit vulnerable residents in their homes to provide face-to-face welfare benefits advice. Together, our outreach sessions and home visits ensure Penistone residents can access support in a way that suits their needs.



We've supported 191 Penistone clients in their own homes with welfare benefits advice. This amounts to £189,111 in previously unearned benefit amount.



We've supported 102 Penistone clients at our community outreach with welfare benefits advice. This amounts to over £193,105 in previously unearned benefit amount.



I honestly can't thank DIAL enough. Before their help, I felt trapped and overwhelmed by my financial situation and the constant struggle with my knees. I didn't even know Attendance Allowance existed, let alone how to apply for it. Receiving the High Rate has been an absolute game-changer. It's not just the money, though that's a huge relief; it's the peace of mind knowing I can better manage my care and finally feel like I have some control over my future again. DIAL gave me back my confidence and my independence.



Spotlight

Stronger Together: Shared Steps

We launched Shared Steps in July after securing funding from Barnsley Council via BCVS. This Pathways to Work initiative supports people who have been out of work due to illness or health conditions, helping them build skills and confidence with the aim of moving into education, training, or employment. In its first run, the programme has supported 15 clients through workshops, peer mentoring, social groups, and one-to-one sessions.

Participants told us....

- 📌 Overall, they feel more confident and have a greater sense of moving forward.
- 📌 The mentoring sessions helped to reduce anxiety, clarify goals, and encouraged them to try new things.
- 📌 The workshops supported recognition of transferable skills, greater assertiveness, and increased self-compassion.

“

I am thankful to Charlotte for helping me to understand how important it is to start to accept my negative feelings and emotions. I understand now if I do this it takes away the power of the OCD. I have learnt about the importance of living in line with my values. This helps to manage my OCD better.

”

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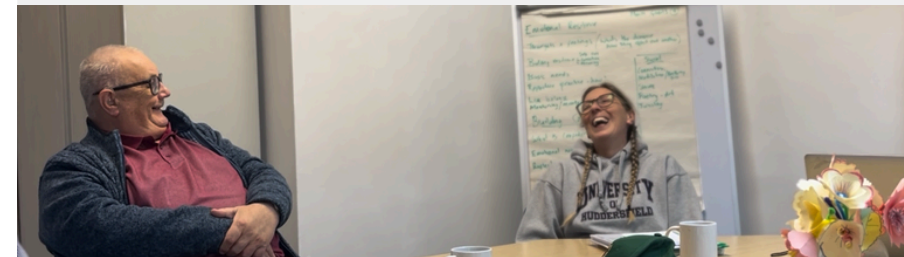
The theory and course was good. Working with Charlotte I have recognised the hardest part now is putting it into practice on a daily basis.

”

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I think it's important that I continue to focus on my own life and make progress towards my goals, to take small steps daily towards my goals with the help of my Mentor.

”



Spotlight

Warm Connections & Small Measures

Our Warm Connections team has continued to go from strength to strength after securing a further £331,000 from the Energy Redress Scheme for the next two years. This funding has enabled us to welcome an additional team member, Carl Gulliford, our Small Measures Handyperson.

Since June 2025, Carl has supported 65 people with Small Measures, equating to nearly 200 hours of client engagement and over £6,000 worth of free energy-saving items. Over the past six months, he has fitted a wide range of measures in people's homes, including thermal curtains, Radflek radiator insulation, energy-saving lightbulbs, draught excluders and energy-saving shower heads.

Overall, the Warm Connections team has supported 685 people with their energy costs, helping them to reduce debt, access grants and financial support, and providing vital advice and information on keeping homes warm. The team has also delivered essential Winter Warm Packs directly to people's homes.

More than 900 hours of direct client support

685 Barnsley residents supported with their energy needs



Just a note to say thank you so much for the wonderful winter warm pack. I absolutely love everything in it and I didn't realise the duvet was going to be a double one and so warm.



Making a Difference

Feedback and Outcomes

- ✓ Almost 100% of clients who used our Advice Line said they were happy with the advice they received and that they would use the service again
- ✓ 96% of clients who used one of our outreach services said they feel less stressed and anxious since using the service
- ✓ 81% of outreach clients said they would find it difficult to find alternative support if our service did not exist
- ✓ 97% of clients who attended one of our foodbank outreach sessions said their health and well-being has improved



I am most grateful for what your organisation did for me. I had never considered any benefits until you enquired about my health problems. Life would have been a struggle without them. I have been able to use my heating more this winter without the worry and I have been able to have treats with my small grandsons. A very big thank you.



I would not have known where to turn if I had not found you. You have changed my life and I can sleep at night. You are brilliant, so understanding. Thank you is not enough to describe the praise I have for you all, especially Duncan and Stefan at Dodworth. I don't know what to say but thank you to you all, you are angels.



You are truly amazing, you know everything there is to know about benefits, more than any other organisation. The advisors are brilliant, and made me feel at ease. I don't know where I'd be without you.



DIAL helped me find out about what I was entitled to. The person I saw was very understanding, helpful and non-judgemental. I would definitely have no hesitation in using the service again.



£ Financial Position

We carried forward: **Unrestricted funds of £201,457**
Restricted funds of £75,361
Designated funds of £135,315

Final balance to carry forward on the 30th April 2025: **£412,133**

Total Income for 2024-2025: **£537,698**

Total expenditure for 2024-2025: **£519,705**

Total Reserves: £135,315

(Reserves help to cover future running costs in the event of a lack of funding; including £44,846 as Infrastructure Development Fund).

The Board has reserved £75,469 in unrestricted funds to meet 3 months salary and running costs in the event of a winding up of the charity, and a contingency of £15,000 in the event of an emergency event.



Over £4,795
from our birthday
fundraiser and
public donations

Thank You!

To all our 2024 funders...



Central Area Council
Central, Dodworth, Kingstone, Stairfoot, Worsbrough



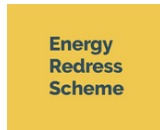
Dearne Area Council

Monk Bretton Ward Alliance

North Area Council
Darton East, Darton West, Old Town, St Helens

Penistone Area Council
Penistone East, Penistone West

North East Ward Alliance
Royston Ward Alliance



Three Guineas



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