



● Chairman of West Lancs Disability Helpline, Dave Roscoe (right) with pensions service delivery manager John Collins and partnership liaison manager Gill Atherton (left) and Helpline manager Tony Lewis (centre) and staff and volunteers

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Extra support from Helpline

OLDER people will benefit from a joint venture between the West Lancs Disability Helpline and the Pensions Service.

The Helpline is now a designated "alternative office", enabling it to issue claim or application forms and to receive and verify them on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions.

This gives older people more choice about when and where they can claim benefits.

Helpline manager Tony Lewis said working together was the way forward: "I am very pleased that the Helpline has been chosen specifically for this new venture as it is yet another indication of the very high esteem in which we are held by partner organisations.

"This will enable us to help our clients even more and further

**By CLIFFORD BIRCHALL
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strengthens our working relationship with the Pensions Service."

John Collins, pensions local service delivery manager, added: "Voluntary organisations already provide an essential service in supporting our mutual clients. Becoming an 'alternative office' will help streamline the process because the customer's claim/application can be forwarded directly to our decision maker with all the supporting evidence already verified."

The Helpline not only accepts claims for certain benefits but can also collect all the relevant information requested and check all documents and other evidence provided by clients.

BENEFITS the Helpline can deal :

- Attendance allowance (for those 65 and over)
- Bereavement payment (for those 60 and over)
- Carer's allowance
- Disability living allowance (for people 60 to 64)
- Incapacity benefit (for people 60 to 64)
- Pension Credit
- State pension
- Winter fuel payment