Do-Well is a randomised controlled trial of a domiciliary welfare rights advice service for people aged over 60 years, recruited from general practices in the North East of England. The intervention is delivered by welfare rights advice services offered by local authority social services departments. The study is funded by the National Institute of Health Research, Public Health Research Programme and has received NHS Research Ethics approval.

In this leaflet, you will find brief details of the study and information to help your practice decide whether to take part. Please read the leaflet and accompanying letter, and then respond using the attached reply slip. Many thanks.

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Newcastle University

fuse The Centre for Translational Research in Public Health

Why is Do-Well important?

Income inequalities among older people are widening and tackling health inequalities is a major policy priority for government. In the UK, large amounts of social welfare benefits are unclaimed, especially in vulnerable groups including older people. Failure to claim entitlements is linked to the complexity of the benefits system, lack of knowledge about entitlements and difficulty in making claims.

In a pilot RCT, also conducted in the North East, we found that facilitating access to a domiciliary welfare rights advice service increased uptake of financial (*e.g.* Attendance Allowance) and non-financial (*e.g.* aids and adaptations in the home) benefits in 58% of participants aged 60 years and over.

What does the study involve?

Randomised controlled trial

We aim to recruit 750 people aged 60 years or more from general practices in 10 local authority districts across the North East. After a baseline assessment, individuals recruited will be randomised to intervention or control group.

Intervention group - Participants will receive a consultation with a trained welfare rights adviser at home. Assistance with benefit claims will be offered and advice and follow-up tailored to individual needs.

Control group - Participants will not receive a welfare rights advice consultation until the end of the trial period (following the final outcome assessment, 24 months later). The full intervention (*i.e.* full benefit assessment and active assistance with claims) will then be offered to all control participants.

Assessments - Data will be collected by interview in participants' homes at baseline (recruitment to study) and at 24 months follow-up. Data will include quality of life, health, health related, financial and other measures. In addition, quality of life will be assessed at 12 months post randomisation using a postal questionnaire.

Qualitative study

Semi-structured interviews will be carried out with up to 30 participants, already recruited to the trial, at 8-11 months and 20-23 months. Approximately 10 stakeholders, including health professionals, will also be interviewed at 20-23 months. Interviews with trial participants will explore acceptability of the intervention/research design and benefits of the intervention. Interviews with professionals will explore the reliability of the intervention, acceptability of the intervention and the research, and

implications for practice.

Economic evaluation

Analysis of the cost of the intervention in relation to main outcomes, as well as mean change in benefits and mean change in total income of participants, will be undertaken.

What are we asking your practice to do?

We aim to recruit two general practices in each local authority district, with a recruitment target of around 38 people aged 60 or over per practice. If your practice already has a welfare rights advice service in house, however, you are not eligible to participate. We are working with the Primary Care Research Network, Northern & Yorkshire (PCRN-NY) on this recruitment process. Each practice will be asked to:

1. Generate a random list of 300 people aged 60 and over from their practice register
2. To identify and exclude any patients that meet the exclusion criteria below
3. To send out to 100 randomly selected patients on this list a letter signed by their GP together with a study information leaflet, inviting participation in the trial
4. Patients will be asked to return an opt-out slip to the practice within 2 weeks if they do not wish their details to be passed onto the research team. We ask you to collect these slips and forward them to our research team.

The research team will then contact individuals from your practice to invite them to take part in the study until we have the required number. We will inform you about which participants will be in the study.

Who will be included in the study?

- A sample of people aged 60 years and over, only 1 person per household
- Individuals providing informed consent

Who will be excluded from the study?

- Practices with access to targeted welfare rights advice services delivered to primary care
- People resident in nursing homes or hospital
- People with a diagnosed terminal illness
- People who cannot participate due to current severe physical or mental health problems
- People who are unable to write or speak English

What research support will be provided?

There is Primary Care Research Network (PCRN) support for this study and your administrative costs will be reimbursed.

The research team will provide clear instructions and produce signed letters (using electronic signatures) on practice headed notepaper for you.

How long will the study last?

The study will last 42 months, finishing in May 2015. Recruitment to the study will start in February-March 2012 and continue for 6 months. Findings will be reported at the end of the study.

What are the anticipated benefits of the study?

Delivery of welfare rights advice to older people, who would not normally receive such a service pro-actively, can result in:

- Increased financial and material benefits for patients
- Improved health related quality of life (*e.g.* ability to maintain independence, increased social participation, decreased stress and anxiety, improved mental health).

The study will provide robust evidence about the impact of welfare rights advice for older people that can be used in future to inform commissioning of such services.

Who can I contact about the study?

Please contact us is you have questions about any aspect of the study. Contact details are below. Further information is available on our web site at: http://www.fuse.ac.uk/group.php?gid=157&pid=2532

Project Manager:

[redacted]

Study Administrator:

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