

Scottish housing charity helps tenants save millions

Financial advisors say they have made a significant impact on tenants' lives.

The Scottish provider of housing and care services for older people, Bield, has helped its tenants save more than £1.8 million.

Through the work of its dedicated Income Advice Officers, Bield Housing and Care has achieved remarkable results, providing crucial support to vulnerable tenants navigating complex benefits systems and pension claims.

First established at the end of 2022, the Income Advice team has achieved significant results over the past 18 months, saving tenants a total of £1,847,740.

Led by experienced advisors, Rebecca Summers and Scott Alexander, the team work with tenants and support staff to offer expert guidance on various financial matters, including pension awareness and claims, Housing Benefit applications, Universal Credit support and grant applications.

Thousands paid back

Rebecca highlighted a recent significant case: "We assisted a gentleman on Universal Credit who was initially told his benefits would only cover rent.

"After extensive work with the DWP, we secured a £12,500 back payment for him, covering essential costs like service charges

and communal heating costs.”

The organisation has noticed a shift towards online services by local councils, which has created challenges for many older individuals, however it has helped process 1,034 referrals since March 2023.

Rebecca continued: “Having application processes exclusively online can be challenging for elderly people particularly if they are dealing with these processes and benefits for the first time.

“We work to offer support and guide tenants through the process, ensuring they receive their maximum entitlement, as well as educating our development staff.”

By raising pension awareness and providing comprehensive financial advice, Bield continues its mission to improve the lives of older people across Scotland, one tenant at a time.

Income Advice

Tracey Howatt, Director of Customer Experience at Bield said: “At Bield, our mission is to help older people in Scotland live independent and fulfilled lives.

“The remarkable achievement of our Income Advice Officers, saving our tenants over £1.8 million, perfectly embodies this commitment. By providing expert guidance on complex financial matters, we’re not just helping with immediate financial needs, but also empowering our tenants to maintain their independence and quality of life.

“We’re constantly innovating and improving our services to meet the evolving needs of older people across Scotland and we’re proud of the tangible difference our dedicated team is making in the lives of our tenants.”

The Income Advice Officers offer guidance on charity

applications, grant applications (including Community Care Grants and Discretionary Housing Payments) and facilitate access to food banks throughout Scotland, as well as identifying further benefits tenants may be eligible for.

These additional benefits, ranging from £5 to £182 per week, empower tenants to address their individual needs and improve their quality of life.

Founded in 1971, Bield has grown from a single housing development to become a leading housing charity in Scotland. Today, it provides support for over 5,000 tenants across more than 170 developments, focusing on enhancing the quality of life for older people through innovative care and housing solutions.

<https://www.bield.co.uk/>



Tenant Ruby McLean and volunteer Fleur Schepen