

"I heard it on the grapevine: £367,000 benefits payout!"

Benefit broadcasts on the air may have brought disabled people and carers in Greater Manchester over a third of a million pounds a year in extra benefits.

Piccadilly Action and the **Greater Manchester Welfare Rights Advisers Group** organised a benefits campaign week in **February 1993**. There were live broadcasts and adverts on **Piccadilly Radio** all week, inviting people to call the Piccadilly Action hotline for advice and leaflets.

As many as **235** of the **685** callers may have successfully claimed an average social security payment of **£30 a week**. That's up to **£367,000** a year extra!

All **685** callers got detailed independent advice and a full information pack about Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Invalid Care Allowance and other benefits.

Twice as many women as men called in. The campaign was a great success. We would like to run more campaigns on benefits, if we can get the funding.

WHAT YOU SAID

"My husband and myself are both disabled. My husband has never claimed anything and now he receives mobility as I do myself, but if I hadn't got in touch with you and got your information pack we still wouldn't have it. Thank you"

Mrs W. 43 years - Clayton

"Thank you for the Claims pack. I finally got Attendance Allowance after 3 attempts."

Mrs Y. 76 years - Bolton

Read all about it inside!

PICCADILLY ACTION

October 1993



HELPING TO MOP UP
UNCLAIMED BENEFITS

Disability Benefits Campaign

PICCADILLY ACTION

Piccadilly Action is a social action broadcasting unit working with radio stations Piccadilly Gold and Key 103 servicing the Greater Manchester area. It is part of the national charity Community Service Volunteers, and its role is to provide an information service on issues of social concern and interest.

GMWRAG

GMWRAG is the Greater Manchester Welfare Rights Advisers Group. It has worked to publicise entitlements to Social Security benefits for several years.

PLANNING

In late 1992 Piccadilly Action and GMWRAG representatives met to talk about working together. It was agreed to run a Disability Benefit take-up campaign during the week commencing 12 February 1993.

An information pack was planned along with on-air publicity and off-air phone-ins. The style and content of the radio messages were discussed with Piccadilly Action's producer and letters were sent to advisers, inviting them to staff the off-air phone line, for the week.

ON-AIR

Radio promotion for the Campaign consisted of on-air broadcasts on Piccadilly Gold and Key 103. Information was broadcast about three benefits and listeners were encouraged by short radio messages to ring the offair advice line for the information pack or to talk to an expert. The prerecorded messages were kept simple and direct. They were alternated one per

show per day over the seven days of the campaign on both frequencies and the presenters were given 'cue cards' to read.

THE CAMPAIGN

The Campaign kicked off on Friday 12 February with an on-air phone in during Umberto's late evening show on Piccadilly Gold. Sue Baker from Stockport Welfare Rights and the late Tony Booth (Tameside Welfare Rights) took calls for the whole four hours of the show. Sue remembers *"they were queuing up to get on. It was very good there were lots of really relevant enquiries. Many of the questions were quite intricate but we were able to answer them then and there or signpost people to other agencies. It generated a lot of interest, - though I'm amazed at the number of people who were prepared to sit up that late at night to talk about disability benefits!"*

OFF-AIR

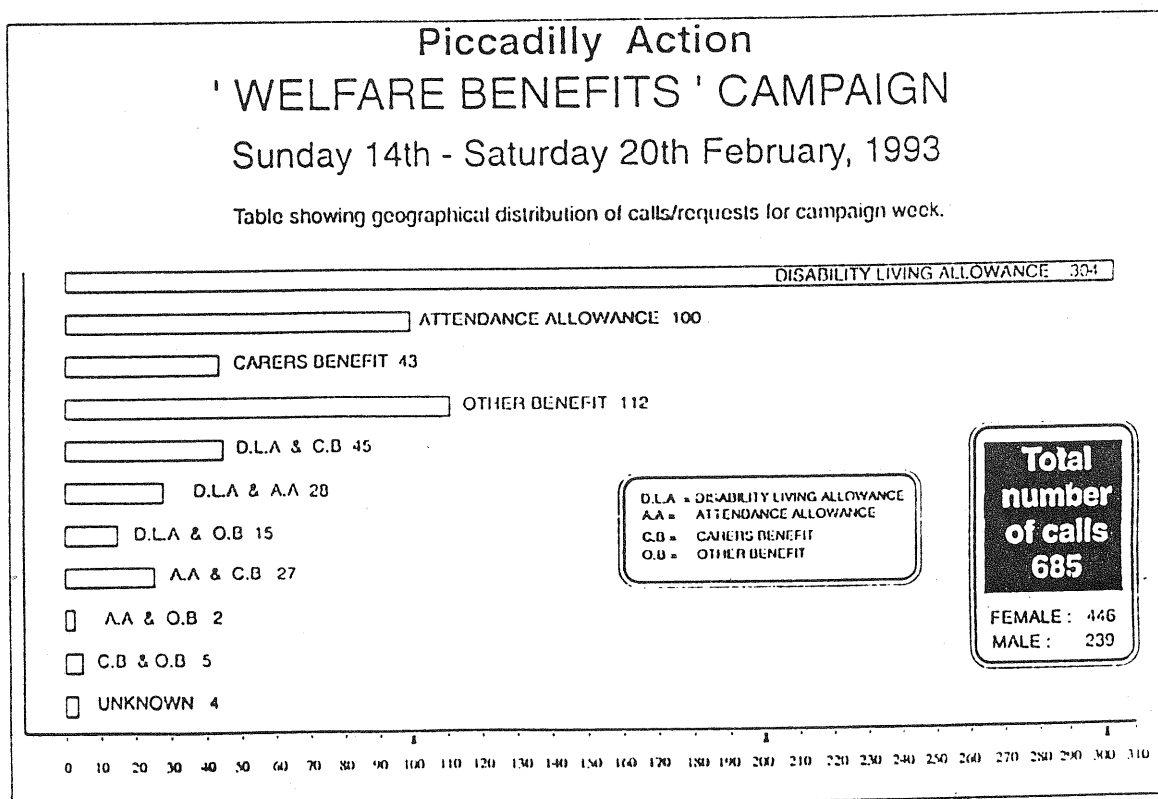
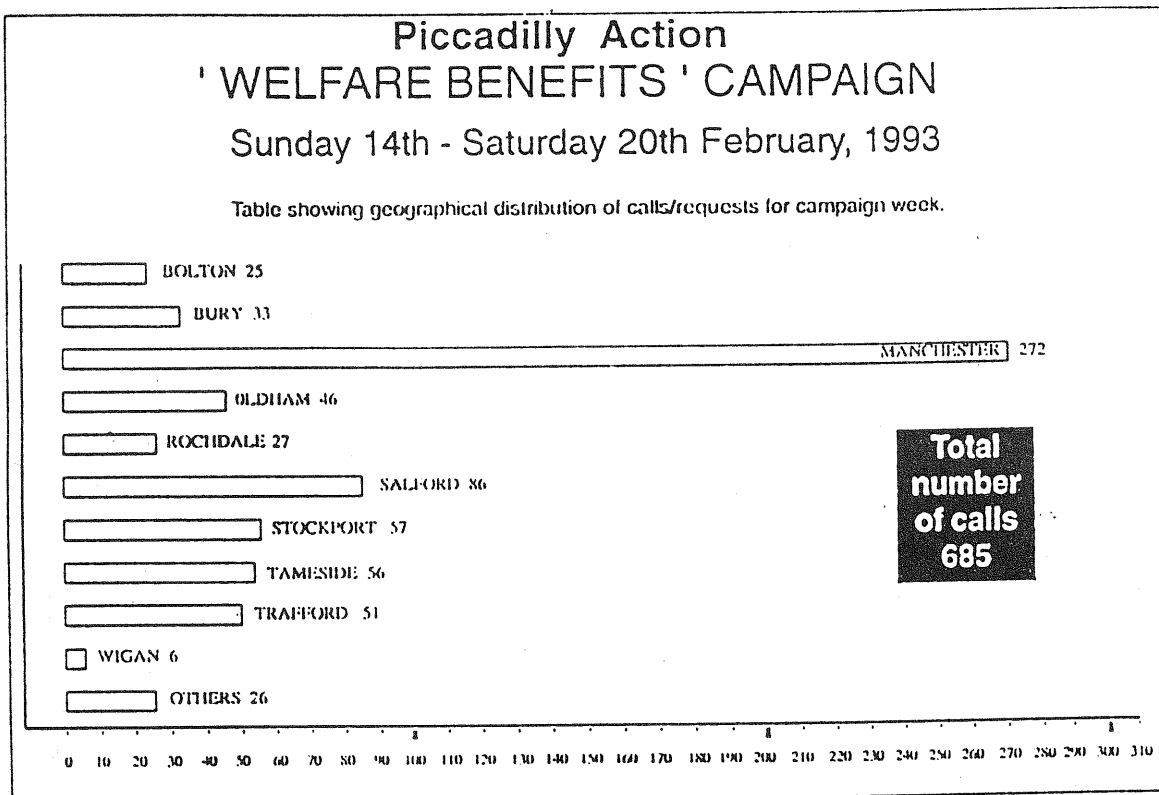
The telephone advice line, based at Piccadilly Action's old offices in Shambles Square, was staffed from 10am-4pm daily by advice workers from Voluntary Agencies and Local Authorities. As Piccadilly Radio broadcasts day and night, an ansaphone was used to cope with evening and overnight calls.

CAMPAIGN WEEK

The four phone lines were staffed by a total of thirty advisers over the week. Advisers came in either from 10am - 1pm or 1pm - 4pm. They covered at least one shift each though some gave much more time than this.

They took over 400 calls and over 650 information packs were sent out by volunteer helpers.

The calls



"Play it again, Sam?"

WHAT THE ADVISERS SAID

Marie Elliott and Bill Evans (Age Concern, Manchester) both thought the week was very useful *"We talked to a lot of people who will really benefit from the service. It's well worth doing again."*

Teresa Holt (Irlam CAB) found it a very busy week. *"We hardly stopped. I was surprised at the number of calls from people who appeared to be entitled - but were getting nothing. A lot of people seemed to be struggling on not aware of their entitlements, some for years, in one case for 7 years!"* She also found that people phoned in on a variety of subjects, not just Disability Benefits.

Cath Warner (Bradford CAB) said she hadn't realised how much housebound people rely on the radio for information *"You tend to think that everybody knows they can get local advice, but they don't. I think there are an awful lot of elderly people who wouldn't know otherwise. Radio is such a good method of communication."* She also noticed an increase in the number of people visiting the unit after the campaign.

Barbara Guest (Manchester Welfare Rights) felt *"The back-up and the address slips were very efficient - it saved a lot of time"*. She found the volume of calls varied from being very busy immediately after a broadcast to a trickle at other times.

FOLLOW UP

As a follow up to the campaign we sent out 500 questionnaires in June 1993 to listeners who had requested information packs. 146 returned the forms. Most said they found the campaign useful and would welcome further campaigns on subjects including Invalidity Benefits, Employment Rights, Housing Benefits and Health Issues.

We want to run more publicity campaigns about benefits, but we have to raise the cash to do so!

MORE OF WHAT YOU SAID

"If we had not have your leaflet, we would never have fought the system"

Mrs JW. 41 years - Partington

"It was very surprising to hear from a local radio station information the government should be supplying and an unexpected surprise to receive the benefit applied for.

Thank you very much!

Mrs C. 63 years - Manchester

"Thank you. But for you, my husband would have lost out on the allowance and although it isn't a lot, it's very welcome to our weekly budget"

Mrs T. 50 years - Bolton

"Very satisfied. This was my third application. The information pack was far more helpful and comprehensive than I expected"

Mrs H. 71 years - Tameside

"Without your help I would have lost out on the small help to which I'm entitled. Thanks!"

Mrs R. 51 years - Salford

This campaign report is dedicated to the memory of the late Tony Booth and his local work.

Piccadilly Action
GMWRAG
October 1993