Tax charities: Christmas campaign

Briefings

23 November 2022

Valerie Boggs, CEO of TaxAid and Tax Help for Older People on how you can support people in poverty and debt to cope with the cost-of-living crisis.

TaxAid and Tax Help for Older People provide free tax advice for people on low incomes who need professional advice but can't afford to pay for it. The people we help have nowhere else to turn, and demand for our support is increasing. No other charities can or do provide the help we do – thanks to our amazing volunteers from the tax profession who give their time and expertise free of charge.

Tax debt brings enormous stress and anxiety and is often another burden on top of low income, disability, bereavement, frailty or poor mental health. Calls to our helplines have increased significantly this year as the cost-of-living crisis pushes more people into poverty and debt.

We have helped more than 20,000 people across the UK this year, ensuring they understand their liabilities and that they pay the right amount of tax. Our beneficiaries often find that as well as their tax problem being resolved, their tax debt is remitted or refunded. For those living in poverty, this can make a life-changing difference.

Margaret (not her real name) called Tax Help for Older People as she was unable to verify her identity for her online tax return. She spent hours going round in circles, but as she did not have a passport or a credit card, she was unable to prove her identity. She contacted HMRC by phone, by letter and via web chat and was told she couldn't be verified. She found this very distressing – she is 63 and has worked since she was 16, and to be unable to verify her identity made her feel invisible.

Our adviser submitted an appeal, advised her on filling in a new tax return and was successful at overturning her late fees. Margaret wrote to her adviser: 'I am so over the moon. I am crying happy tears. You've turned everything upside down and made

it alright again. I don’t know how I can ever thank you enough.’

Many more people like Margaret will need help and support with their tax over the next few months. Please help us to support them with the independent expert advice they need by donating to the charities’ joint campaign at: cafdonate.cafonline.org/18211. Thank you.