

## Welcome to the new look ABC!

You may have noticed that things look a little different. We have worked with Circle Creative to design a new logo and icon which you will also see on our new-look website and new marketing materials.

Training has now been delivered to 195 participants on how to use the prototype Benefit Screening Tool. Over 400 older people have completed screenings since January.

Work has also continued on the Partnership Network, including attendance at events in Larne, Banbridge and Dungannon.

Phase one of the build of the permanent Benefit Screening Tool is well underway and we plan to 'go live' in the summer.

We have completed a piece of research on the take-up of Housing Benefit, Rate Relief and Disabled Person's Allowance for the Department of Finance and Personnel. This is now available online at [www.ratingreviewni.gov.uk](http://www.ratingreviewni.gov.uk).

Our new Training Officer, Brendan, has recently taken up his post.



# The ABC

access to benefits circular

**a2b** | access to  
benefits  
REAPING REWARDS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

april 2008

## About A2B

A2B is working to help older people in Northern Ireland maximise their take-up of benefit entitlements.

We are developing a 'Benefit Screening Tool' which will calculate benefit entitlement for an older person and will also signpost them to other benefits which do not depend on their income.

Through outreach work we are identifying older people and the organisations that work with them. This allows us to raise awareness of the calculator and helps us to reach more isolated people, including those in rural areas. We are also providing training support to overcome any barriers to benefit take-up that many older people face and to help with the technological aspects of the tool.

A2B is funded for four years by The Atlantic Philanthropies and specific funding from the Department of Finance and Personnel.

## Our plans for the coming months

We will all be working hard over the coming weeks putting the final touches to our permanent Benefit Screening Tool which will be available in the summer — keep your eyes peeled for details of our official launch event later in the year.

After the permanent Screening Tool is available, we will be continuing our programme of training on how to use it.

A2B is building a technology partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau, sharing IT capacity between the two organisations.

Some of the events we will be attending include the Young at Heart retirement exhibition on 21 and 22 May and a Silver Surfers' Day event in Armagh on 23 May.

### Other news

The rates for many benefits, including Retirement Pension, Attendance Allowance and Pension Credit, changed at the beginning of April.

If you are over 70 and live alone, you can now apply for a 20% discount on your rates bill. If you own your home, contact Land and Property Services to apply for the Lone Pensioner Allowance; if you do not own your home, you should contact the NIHE.

### The A2B staff team

- Patrick Minne, Chief Executive Officer
  - Tracy Bell, Project Coordinator
- Hilary Doherty, Outreach/ Community Development Officer
  - Zoë Anderson, Content Officer
  - Kate Cowan, User Experience Officer
    - Neil Curran, Technology Officer
  - James Thompson, IT Support Engineer
    - Brendan Rafferty, Training Officer

### Contact Us

A2B: Access to Benefits for Older People

Unit 40, North City Business Centre

2 Duncairn Gardens

Belfast BT15 2GG

[a2b@a2b.org.uk](mailto:a2b@a2b.org.uk)

028 9075 4070

Staff emails are of the format *first name*@a2b.org.uk