

In October 2008, a lady in Newcastle, Co. Down, found out about the A2B calculator when she attended a local community group presentation. She had been concerned about the increases in her rates bill which had risen to £1,080. Using the A2B Benefit Calculator in private at home, she was able to establish she was due £710 in Housing Benefit for Rates and an extra £289 in Rates Relief. She applied for these successfully, reducing her rates bill to just over £80, and was additionally awarded £1,260 in backdated Housing Benefit. Following registration for Rates Relief, she also received a letter encouraging her to apply for Pension Credit.

In January 2009, a North West man who had got a successful outcome from using A2B's Benefit Calculator related his story to his neighbour. She was in her mid-eighties and widowed and, though an avid reader, had difficulty seeing. She was already in receipt of low rate Disability Living Allowance for a range of disabilities. He encouraged her to get screened for other unclaimed benefit at a local political party constituency who routinely used the A2B Calculator to help older constituents. £123 per week in unclaimed Pension Credit Guarantee Credit per week was identified, as well as £18 per week in Housing Benefit for Rates. The constituency officer was able to help her apply for these and was also able to arrange for an Occupational Therapist to help with her disabilities. The lady was particularly pleased that she could now afford to buy angled low level lights to help with her reading.

A County Derry man in his late 60s was living off the redundancy money he had been awarded two years previously. He was on medication for a nervous condition. Though he had not worked for two years and had negligible income, he told his sister he was reluctant to go to the Social Security Agency for help through a combination of pride and worry. She referred him to a local MLA's office, where it emerged that he was down to his last £69. His previously concealed financial situation appeared to be at the root of his nervous condition. Following a screening using the A2B Benefit Calculator, he learned that he qualified for £122 per week in Pension Credit Guarantee Credit and £18 per week in Housing Benefit for Rates for which he successfully applied.

Through word of mouth, a man in his mid-70s in Limavady was concerned that he might need help because of the deteriorating health of his wife who has Multiple Sclerosis. He attended the offices of an A2B Partnership Network member in his area as a first step. Staff there were able to screen him using the A2B Benefit Calculator. As well as identifying an unclaimed weekly amount of Pension Credit of £64 and Housing Benefit for Rates of £26, the Calculator signposted them to Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance for which they applied. The couple now have a social worker appointed and respite care has been arranged. "It's a relief that we are now in the care system" commented the man.

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A lady in North Down in her mid sixties, who was a member of a Community Group which got training in how to use the A2B Benefit Calculator, thought she was receiving everything she was due. She had a go at the Benefit Calculator anyway and discovered that she was being underpaid her Pension Credit by £4 per week and successfully applied for the correct rate in March 2009.

Aged in their late 60s and mid 70s, two friends living near Lisburn with a range of mobility issues got screened for unclaimed benefits using the A2B Benefit Calculator at a meeting of their local Senior Citizens group. In both cases, their answers indicated that they should consider applying for Attendance Allowance which they did successfully and now receive at the higher rate of £67 per week. Shortly afterwards in March 2009 the Pension Service contacted them separately to review their Pension Credit entitlement.

A lady living in Spain carried out a Benefit Calculation on behalf of her mother who lives in Northern Ireland. She had been given an A2B leaflet while home on holiday and carried out the calculation when she returned to Spain. As a result, her mother was shown to be entitled to a range of benefits and the lady has now been referred on to an advice centre local to where her mother lives. This case highlights the flexibility of the Benefit Calculator as it can be used by anyone with access to the internet.

A Belfast man in his early sixties who had been made redundant from his manufacturing job two months previously attended an A2B workshop in April 2009. His wife worked part time but had been on long term sick leave. Because of family circumstances, the couple were charged with raising their teenage granddaughter and claimed child benefit, but were concerned about being able to support her through university, which she hoped to attend. No information had yet been received about his entitlement to occupational pension. A Social Security Agency representative who visited his workplace prior to the redundancy signposted him to Job Seekers Allowance of £60.50 per week, raising his monthly income to £360, against outgoings of £800. Additionally he had an outstanding rates bill which he was unable to pay. Being on JSA, he needed to prove he was looking for work each week, a process he cited as being degrading to someone who had been in work for 48 years. Neither a visit to a local advice office or his GP had resulted in signposting to appropriate services. He volunteered for an anonymous Benefit Calculation at the A2B workshop which established that he was eligible for Pension Credit which would allow him to retire without having to go through the process of proving he was actively seeking and available for work each fortnight. It also established his eligibility for rates relief removing the worry he had about his outstanding bill.