

Charity: Will you donate your last hour to help people like Mary?

Briefings



20 November 2024

Can you support vulnerable people in the UK by donating to TaxAid and Tax Help for Older People this Christmas?

Mary, a pensioner living with brain cancer, called our helpline earlier this year about a tax underpayment. This is not unusual on our helpline. However, in Mary's case we were quite surprised, as in 2017 we had successfully appealed this same underpayment and the tax had been remitted.

In 2017, we had found that the tax underpayment of £1,723 for the tax year 2016/17 had arisen because of a coding error on Mary's pension following the death of her husband. We appealed the debt with HMRC on the grounds of Mary's ill health and the impact of her recent bereavement; her debt was remitted.

When the same debt reappeared five years later, Mary couldn't quite believe it and was incredibly worried about how she would manage to pay it. She was surviving on

her state pension and two small private pensions. Our adviser contacted HMRC to find out why this underpayment had come back into play after all this time but the reason remains unclear.

We appealed the underpayment again, stating that there had been no change to Mary's circumstances, and again the appeal was accepted and the debt was remitted. Understandably, Mary couldn't quite believe it and asked that we send her a letter confirming that the debt had been removed, and saying: 'Thank you. It has caused some sleepless nights but I would rather go to prison than pay as I don't think it is fair.'

At TaxAid and Tax Help for Older People, our mission is to help people who need tax advice and support but who are unable to pay for it – people like Mary who find themselves in tax debt due to no fault of their own. We are the only charities in the UK providing specialist direct tax help to vulnerable people in the UK, and it is only with your help that we can continue to support people like Mary through their tax issues.

Can you donate your last hour?

This is why we are asking our wonderful supporters in the tax community to please gift us the last hour of your pay this Christmas. Last year, we supported 18,667 people like Mary through our expert tax advice helplines. We helped to generate £315,937 in tax refunds and remitted £1,063,139 in tax debt for the most financially vulnerable people in the UK. Together, we can stop vulnerable people from falling further into financial hardship paying tax debt that they do not owe.

Please donate your last hour's pay this Christmas. You can donate to the tax charities through our joint fundraising campaign, Bridge the Gap, using this link: <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/27176>. The funds raised will be split evenly between the two charities. You can also use our QR code to donate. Thank you for your generosity.