Citizens Advice Scheme helps 10,000th STW customer this year

Thursday 2 March, 2017

Coventry Citizens Advice – in partnership with Severn Trent Water – is leading the Big Difference Scheme to help struggling customers access discounted water rates. These savings can be crucial to help struggling families make ends meet alongside our expert money advice and other services that help people get back on track financially, and improve their lives.

Alan and Lorraine Tranter became the 10,000th household to be awarded a discount on their Severn Trent Water bill since April 2016 after their Macmillan Adviser, Rebecca Carpenter, made a successful application to the Big Difference Scheme.

Alan is diagnosed with cancer and Lorraine is disabled, and their income is very limited so circumstances have been extremely difficult for the two of them in recent years.

Thanks to their work with Rebecca, they now have a reduced water bill of £2.74 a month! As they had previously overpaid their bill, Rebecca discovered they were in credit of £340+ with Severn Trent and managed to get this amount refunded to them. Rebecca has also been able to help them access a grant, help with filling in PIP forms and other advice. Macmillan has also been able to offer regular support and information to Lorraine as she cares for Alan through his cancer.

Mr and Mrs Tranter were absolutely delighted and ecstatic with the help they received from Rebecca and the support the scheme offered. “I was very surprised as it’s a great saving, I’d just been paying my water every month by standing order and I didn’t realise such help was available. Everyone’s been really helpful and I was even more surprised when I learned I was due such a huge refund for having a credit on the account!”

Jessica Brindley, Macmillan Cancer Information & Support Manager, says “Macmillan research shows that four in five people affected by cancer are on average £570 a month worse off so reducing their water bills with this scheme is a great help.”

CEO of Citizens Advice Coventry, Caroline Leighton, says “The support we have provided to more than 10,000 households across the region is amazing and Mr and Mrs Tranter’s story is just one example of the impact the Big Difference Scheme can have.”

Like Mr and Mrs Tranter, Severn Trent Water customers accessing the Big Difference Scheme through their local Citizens Advice – or another local partner – can receive assistance with a range of other issues to compliment the help they are getting with their water bill.

In total the Big Difference Scheme has helped over 32,000 financially vulnerable households to reduce their water bills and increase their well-being and financial stability.

Severn Trent customers who are interested in accessing the Big Difference Scheme can visit www.bigdifference.org.uk to find out more about the scheme, access an application form and look up local agencies who may be able to help.

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Notes for editors:

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1- The Big Difference Scheme is a partnership between Coventry Citizens Advice and Severn Trent Water.

2- Se www.bigdifference.org.uk/find-a-local-adviser/ for full list of participating agencies.

3- If Severn Trent Customers think they could benefit from the Big Difference Scheme, they can visit our website (www.bigdifference.org.uk), call us on 024 7625 2600 or visit their local Citizens Advice.

4- More information about the Telford Macmillan Welfare Rights team is available here https://goo.gl/1anNQ3

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