

COMMON ADVICE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTING FRAMEWORK

Annual Report 2022/23



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The Common Advice Performance Management Reporting Framework provides an annual overview of the key activities of local authority funded money and welfare rights advice services across Scotland. This briefing pulls together data collected from Scottish local authorities on the services they fund, including those delivered internally within the local authority and those externally commissioned to provide advice.

The current overview highlights activity from the 2022/23 financial year with an aim to:

- provide a picture of the support delivered by local authority funded money and welfare rights advice services,
- demonstrate the significant investment made by local authorities in these essential services, and,
- highlight how this support and investment has changed over time.

Demographics

Summary of Demographics¹

In 2022/23 the most common characteristics of money and welfare rights advice clients supported by local authority funded services were:



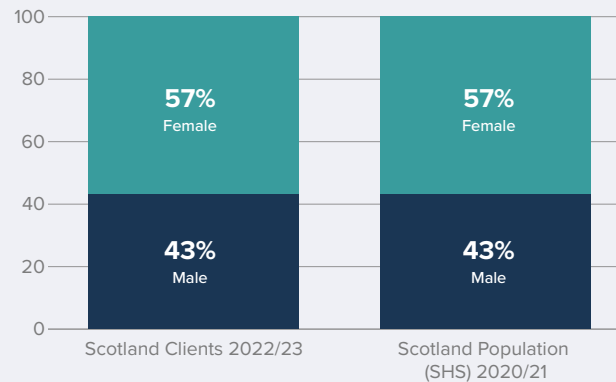
A summary for each characteristic is shown below. These figures exclude clients reported under “not recorded” or “prefer not to answer”. As such, figures should be treated with caution as they do not represent the total number of clients supported by services. More detail on the excluded figures can be found in the statistical summaries on the Improvement Service website.²

1. These figures exclude figures reported under “Not Recorded” or “Prefer not to answer”.

2. www.improvementservice.org.uk/products-and-services/performance-management-and-benchmarking/common-advice-performance-management-framework

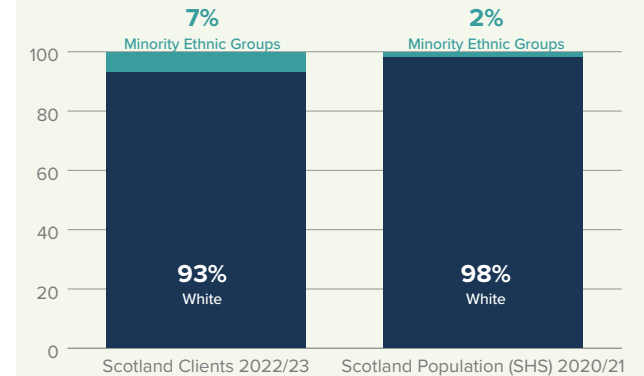
Sex

Money and welfare rights advice clients are predominately female and represent the same proportion as those in the Scottish adult population. Therefore, there is equal representation of males and females.



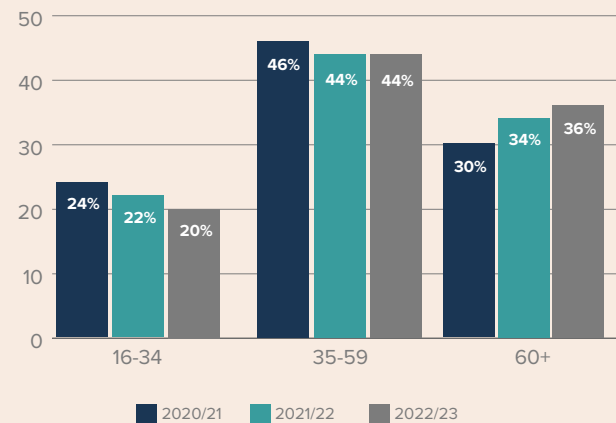
Ethnicity

In 2022/23 7% of clients were from minority ethnic groups, compared with 2% in the Scottish adult population.⁴



Age

Over the past three years there has been an increasing proportion of older clients. Clients aged 60 and above made up 36% of clients in 2022/23 compared with 30% in 2020/21. However, younger clients are overrepresented when compared with the Scottish population. In 2022/23 20% of clients were aged 16-34 whereas this age group represented 15% of the Scottish adult population.³ These changes may be related to targeted campaigning within services; further exploration of the reasons for these changes would be worthwhile.



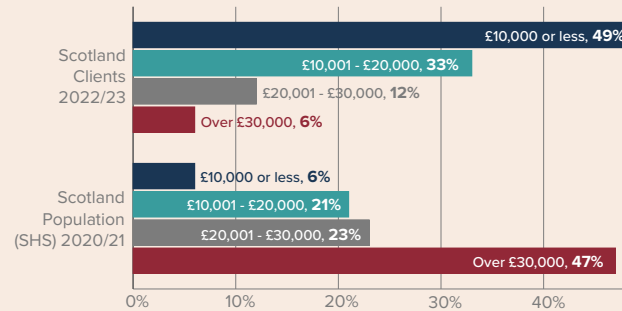
3. Scottish Government. (April 2023). Scottish Household Survey 2021. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-household-survey-2021-telephone-survey-key-findings/documents/>

4. Scottish Government. (April 2023). Scottish Household Survey 2021. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-household-survey-2021-telephone-survey-key-findings/documents/>



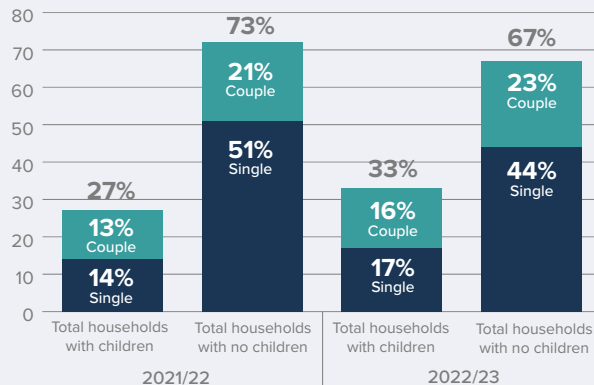
Household income

Household income of clients supported by local authority funded money advice services was lower than the household income of the Scottish adult population.⁵



Household composition

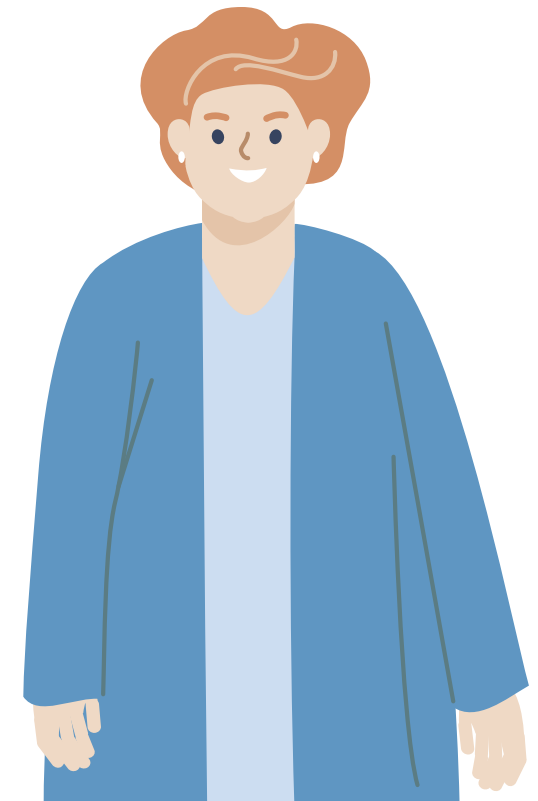
The proportion of clients from households with children has increased five percentage points between 2021/22 and 2022/23. Single parent households made up 17% of clients in 2022/23 compared with 14% in 2021/22.



What does it mean?



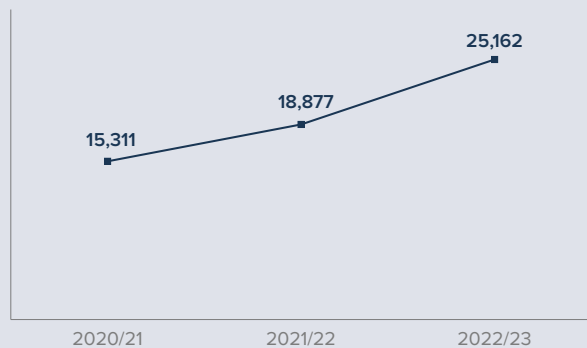
Local Authority funded money and welfare rights advice clients support a wide range of demographics including those facing the greatest disadvantages. The high proportions of clients from lower income households and increasing proportions of clients from households with children suggest that support is reaching those most in need.



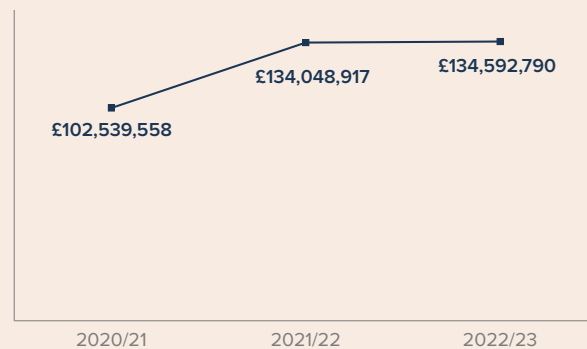
5. Scottish Government. (April 2023). Scottish Household Survey 2021. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-household-survey-2021-telephone-survey-key-findings/documents/>

Debt clients and amount owed

Local authority funded money advice services reported supporting 25,162 debt clients in 2022/23. This reflects an increase of 33% since 2021/22 and 64% since 2020/21.



Debt clients supported in 2022/23 owed a reported total of £134.5 million. The total amount owed has remained stable since since the previous year but is 31% higher than in 2020/21.

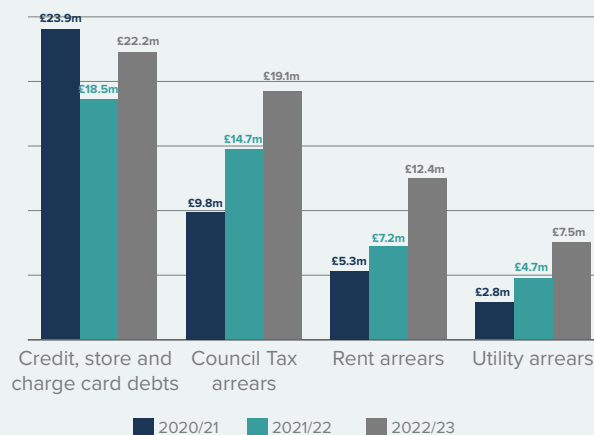


What does this mean?



Increasing debt client numbers show there is more demand for debt advice. The combined effects of the ongoing Cost of Living Crisis and the impacts of COVID-19 could be pushing more people to need and seek out support. Whilst overall debt hasn't increased, the types of debts clients have is concerning with greater levels of debt owed for essential household costs.

The total amount of debt owed for, council tax arrears, rent arrears and utility arrears has almost doubled since 2020/21. Debt related to credit, store and charge cards has substantially increased over the past three years. Debt associated with rent arrears had the largest increase in the most recent year, increasing by 74%.



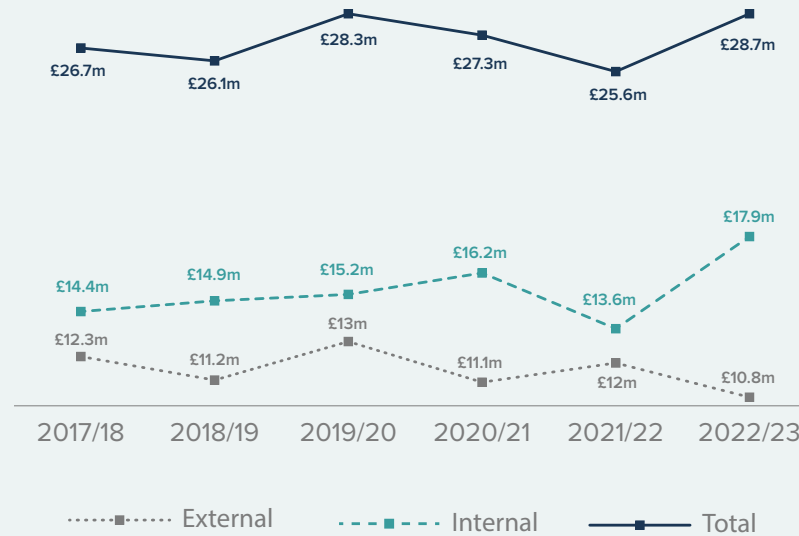
Funding

In 2022/23 a total of £28,660,626 was reported as invested by local authorities in money and welfare rights advice services. This includes £17,867,983 in internally delivered services and £10,792,643 in externally commissioned services.

Overall, there has been an increase in local authority funding since 2017/18, however this varies across local authorities and individual services. Looking only at

figures from local authorities able to provide complete data in 2021/22 and 2022/23 the average change in local authority funding for internally delivered services was an increase of 20% with just over half of the applicable local authorities reporting an increase in funding. For externally delivered services, the average change across local authorities able to provide complete data in both years was an increase of 12%.

Many services receive funding from multiple sources, however local authorities account for a large portion of this funding. In 2022/23 of the total funding local authority money and welfare rights advice services received, local authority funding accounted for 49%.



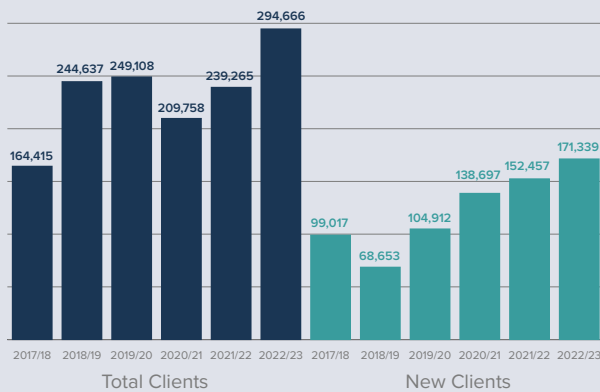
What does this mean?



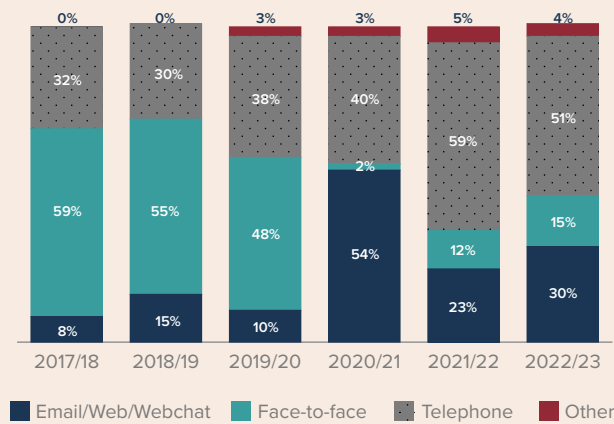
Local authorities continue to invest significant amounts in money and welfare rights advice services. Whilst this has generally increased over time, increased investment often aligns with increasing costs as well as increased functions tied to this investment, such as specific pilot projects. Furthermore, some increases in funding may be secured from external sources, such as 'levelling up' funding, and therefore is short-term and not included in core council budgets. Reductions in funding are also influenced by different factors, including cessation of short-term funding for specific projects, changing delivery and funding models and vacancies with posts.

Volume

Local authority funded advice services reported supporting a total of 294,666 clients in 2022/23, including 171,339 new clients. The number of clients supported has continued to increase since 2017/18. Between 2021/22 and 2022/23 total clients increased by almost a quarter.



Face to face contact has continued to increase following the almost entire removal of this option in 2020/21 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Telephone contact remains the most common contact method with 51% of initial contacts with the service made over the phone.

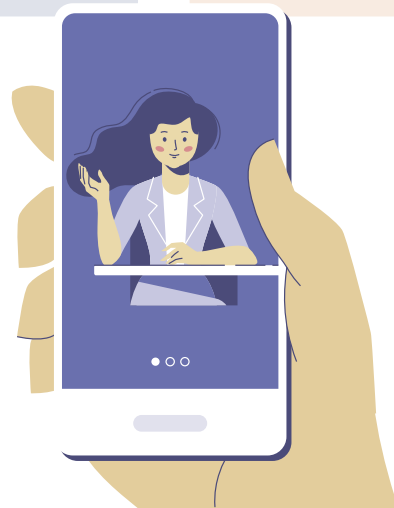


What does this mean?



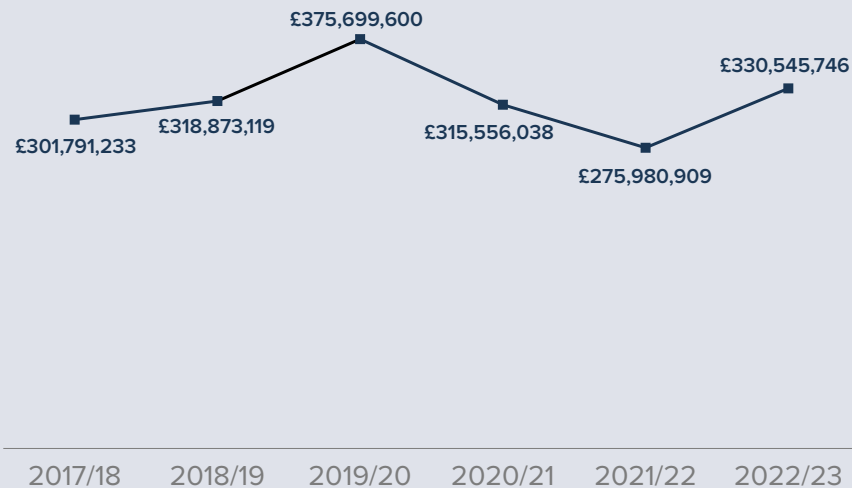
In recent years services have supported increasing volumes of clients. This may reflect increased demand given the financial insecurity of those dealing with the compounding effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis. The increased volume may also reflect increased efficiencies through new ways of working with digital methods potentially enabling more clients to be supported.

Services have continued to operate predominantly through digital means following the change in operations during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, face-to-face contact remains necessary in some cases and has grown in recent years.



Financial gain

In 2022/23 services reported securing £330,545,746 verified financial gain for clients. This value reflects an increase of 20% in the most recent year, following two years of decline. 72% of the local authorities able to provide complete figures each year reported an increase in financial gain between 2021/22 and 2022/23.



What does this mean?



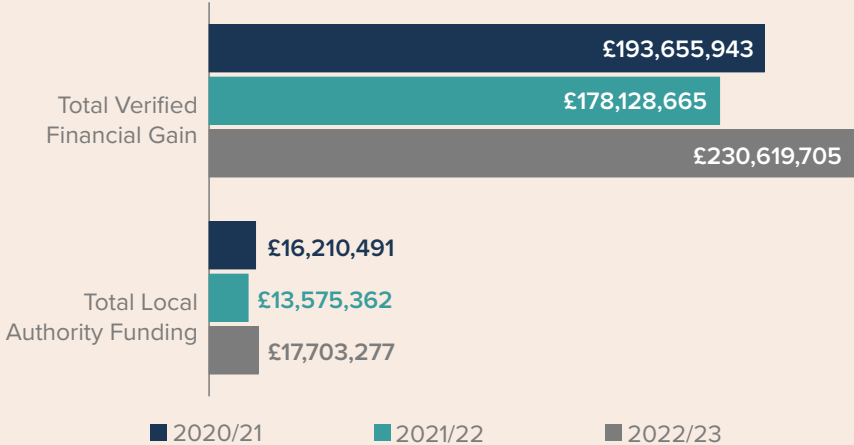
Money and welfare rights advice services continue to achieve significant gains for clients. Gains have increased in the most recent year, potentially reflecting the increased levels of support delivered in the most recent year following slight downturns during the pandemic.

Support from money and welfare rights advice services likely resulted in higher levels of gains than can be reported here as not all gains can be verified by services. Nevertheless, the substantial gains reported highlight the tangible benefits advice services provide to clients and the importance of continued funding for these services. In 2022/23, every £1 of local authority funding invested in money and welfare rights advice resulted in £12 financial gain for clients.



Local authority delivered services

The total verified financial gain reported by internally delivered local authority services has increased 29% between 2021/22 and 2022/23. A total of £230,619,705 verified financial gain was achieved for clients in 2022/23 representing £13 of financial gain for every £1 invested by local authorities.



What does this mean?



When looking only at services delivered internally by local authorities the same trends are seen. The total number of clients and total verified financial gain both increased over the past year. These services supported a total of 163,277 clients in 2022/23 achieving £230,619,705 verified financial gain.



Key takeaways

Demonstratable benefits

Local authority funded money and welfare rights advice services continue to demonstrate excellent value for money with significant financial gain achieved for clients. These gains outweigh the investment made each year, making a compelling case for continued investment.

Increasing demand

The most recent figures suggest services are facing increasing demand for support, and increasingly so for support with debts for household costs. If services are to keep pace with this increasing demand they need to be adequately resourced with increased investment for core services.

Important role in tackling poverty

Money and welfare rights advice services play an important role in tackling poverty. The figures highlight how services support some of those most at risk of facing poverty including increasing proportions of single parents. This role should be championed within local authorities to support increased investment and grow recognition of the potential of advice services as a route to those in need.



Methodology

The purpose of the CAPMRF is to report and analyse the key results of investment made by local authorities in money and welfare rights advice services (covering both internal delivery and external commissioning) and to assess the results achieved for this investment.

In doing so, the report aims to help 'tell the story' regarding the value of advice services, as well as provide a mechanism for councils to benchmark their performance against national trends and identify scope to further improve the impact and value for money of these services. This report has been produced by the Improvement Service (IS) in conjunction with Scotland's local authorities. The work has been made possible as the result of funding provided to the IS by the Scottish Government.

The current ninth iteration of the framework analyses returns from local authorities covering the period 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023. All 32 local authorities in Scotland provide either in-house money and welfare rights advice, fund an external provider to deliver these services or, indeed, do both. In 2022/23 Scottish local authorities funded 25 internally delivered services and 63 externally delivered services.

There are several points to consider in relation to the reporting of the framework in the most recent year:

Reduced number of indicators

Prior to 2022/23 many additional indicators were included in the framework. These were reported on with limited success. As a result, in the most recent year the data collection was simplified with a focus on collecting information that was known to be most relevant and fairly readily provided by local authorities.

Gaps in data

In 2022/23 two local authorities were unable to provide any data, a further two local authorities could not provide data for all services they fund, and as result four services are missing data for 2022/23. Other gaps in the data exist where services cannot record certain indicators partly due to varying capabilities of the case

management systems used. Gaps are identified where they exist in the analysis and must be considered when interpreting the findings. It should be noted that missing data are generally likely to contribute to underestimations of the workload and impact of the services. Whilst gaps do exist in the data, the volume and quality of data reported by local authorities has improved.

Variations in funding and delivery models

Local authorities vary in the how money and welfare rights advice services are funded and delivered and therefore are not directly comparable. The data in this briefing provides a general overview of the national trend in this activity across Scotland, however local knowledge and intelligence should also be considered.

These variations also mean that whilst the majority of figures fit within the agreed definitions a small proportion may include activity not funded



by the local authority or activity focused on other areas of advice.

Year on year volatility

Given the gaps in the data and changes over time in how data is recorded, comparisons over time should be treated with caution.

The data received from each local authority in Scotland, upon which this analysis is based, is publicly available in the form of individual statistical summaries on the Improvement Service website,⁶ as is a national statistical summary which provides a more detailed breakdown of the figures highlighted in this report. These reports highlight in detail where gaps and caveats exist in the data and where figures should be treated with caution. An indicator guide is also available on the Improvement Service website which outlines the measures included in the framework and how these are recorded.



6. www.improvementservice.org.uk/products-and-services/performance-management-and-benchmarking/common-advice-performance-management-framework

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