



Impact report

**citizens
advice**

Westminster

2022 - 2023

The difference we make to Westminster

We are Citizens Advice Westminster

Every year thousands of people come to us for help solving their problems. This means we're an important part of the community, with a credible understanding of local needs. We use this to tailor our services and help improve local policies and practices.

Working in partnership

We take great pride in our collaborative efforts with Westminster City Council, alongside a network of voluntary and community organizations throughout Westminster. Notably, this includes our joint WASP initiative with esteemed partners such as Age UK Westminster, Asylum Aid, and Deaf Plus.

The Westminster Refernet partnership is currently comprised of 35 distinguished partners.

What we do

We help people with a range of problems including issues with housing, debt, benefits, employment, relationships and consumer rights. Sometimes people have more than one issue they need help with.

In fact, the complexity of cases has increased – on average each client is now supported with up to 5 separate issues.

"The economic crises of the past 18 months have had an impact on all aspects of the daily lives of our clients, who already faced multiple challenges.

By working together to advise and support clients facing spiralling debt, skyrocketing energy costs, food insecurity and a lack of decent and affordable housing we can change lives and directly contribute to better health and wellbeing in Westminster".



Joanna Cain (CEO)



Advice in numbers



38,109

Issues dealt with

Advice services like Citizens Advice Westminster play an indispensable role in empowering individuals and communities. In the last 18 months our dedicated team provided advice and casework for 7,175 clients, and answered 8,363 calls on Adviceline, addressing 38,109 issues. Key issues were Welfare Benefits, Housing, and Charitable support. In the 12 months from September 2022, year on year there was a 700% increase in crisis support referrals.



7,175

Clients offered
information & advice



18,755

Phone calls with clients



63%

Of clients are women

Our clients

Our clients predominantly represent the Global Majority, with 63% from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, emphasizing our reach into diverse populations. With 60% managing long-term health issues or disabilities and 63% being women, our services cater to those facing significant challenges, affirming our commitment to supporting underserved and vulnerable groups.



63%

Of clients are Global Majority
(from Black and Minority
Ethnic communities)



60%

Of clients helped have a long-term
health condition or are disabled



18

Outreach locations across
Westminster

Accessibility

Overall 63% of our client contacts were by phone, 23% were online and 10% face to face. We have improved face to face accessibility through reopening drop in Advice shop sessions and with new outreach locations across Westminster, introducing a webchat service in order to ensure that help is available where it's most needed.



1,530

Clients helped through
Refernet

Referral pathways

Since April 2022, 19 new partners have joined the Westminster Refernet partnership. So far 1,530 clients received the help through referrals, demonstrating the power of collaborative, coordinated effort among different service providers.



64%

Improved health and
capacity to manage

Health and wellbeing

Housing, income and employment are all wider determinants of health, and 64% clients who reported an outcome said that their health and wellbeing improved as a result of the advice they received. Additionally, 19% of clients felt they had increased their knowledge and confidence regarding their rights and responsibilities.

£3,652,662

Income gain for clients (benefit
increases, charitable awards, re-imbursements &
other financial awards)

Financial outcomes

A total income gain of £3.7m for our clients is not just a number—it's a transformative change that can uplift entire families, alleviate stress, and provide a pathway to more stable living conditions.

£92,809

In debts written off

The clearance of £93k in debts is particularly noteworthy, as it not only signifies the financial relief provided but also underscores the positive impact on mental and physical health that comes with reduced financial pressure.

In summary, the figures speak volumes about the tangible, life-altering benefits that advice services offer. By continuing to adapt, collaborate, and focus on those most in need, we can look forward to even more impactful work in the future.

Their stories...



Case studies provide concrete examples of how advice services positively impact individuals in real-life situations. Margaret & Alanna's* story showcases the practical and significant changes that can occur when tailored advice and support is provided.

Margaret's Story

Margaret, 62, faced adversity with job loss and lung cancer. Financially strained by benefit cuts, she gained vital support: PIP added £4,940 yearly, and her Universal Credit rose by £390 monthly. She received a £250 emergency payment, foodbank aid, a 50% water bill cut, and a charity covered her £643 rent debt plus she received a £600 cost-of-living payment. This comprehensive support turned her life around, enabling her to manage without the foodbank and concentrate on recovery.

Alanna's Story

Alanna had a wide range of debts including to a loan shark. She has a range of serious health conditions and depression. Our adviser supported her over 5 months. As a result of the casework Alanna's debts were written off or substantially reduced, enabling her to repay the loan shark and buy essential white goods. As a consequence of this support her mental health improved substantially.

***Names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of our clients**