

Impact report

85
Years of

**citizens
advice**

Westminster

2023 - 2024

The difference we make to Westminster

We're Citizens Advice Westminster - the people's champion

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.

What we do

We help people with a range of problems including issues with housing, debt, benefits, employment, relationships and consumer rights.

People often come to us with multiple or complex problems. In fact, the complexity of cases has increased, and on average each client is now supported with up to **6 separate issues**.

We can deal with most of the issues people come us with, tailoring our advice to their needs.

Our volunteer champions

Our volunteers are **vital** to our mission, empowering Westminster residents with the information and advice they need to move forward in their lives. Their dedication not only helps us reach a larger number of people, but also keeps us deeply rooted in the community.

With over **40%** of our volunteers living locally, many speaking community languages, they ensure we stay connected and responsive to diverse needs. Additionally, local residents serving on our board of trustees further strengthen our commitment to community representation and leadership.

“**Over the past 18 months, 53 volunteers have contributed over 2,000 hours, delivering £400,000 in value to our community. Their dedication has expanded our reach and provided vital support to local residents, driving meaningful change every day.**”



Joanna Cain (CEO)



Emma - Volunteer Gateway
Assessor

Volunteering in numbers

People like Adrian give their time, skills and experience to enable us to reach as many people as we do.

Adrian has supported **over 500 vulnerable clients** through our helpline alone.



 **2,772**

Days volunteered to help deliver our services

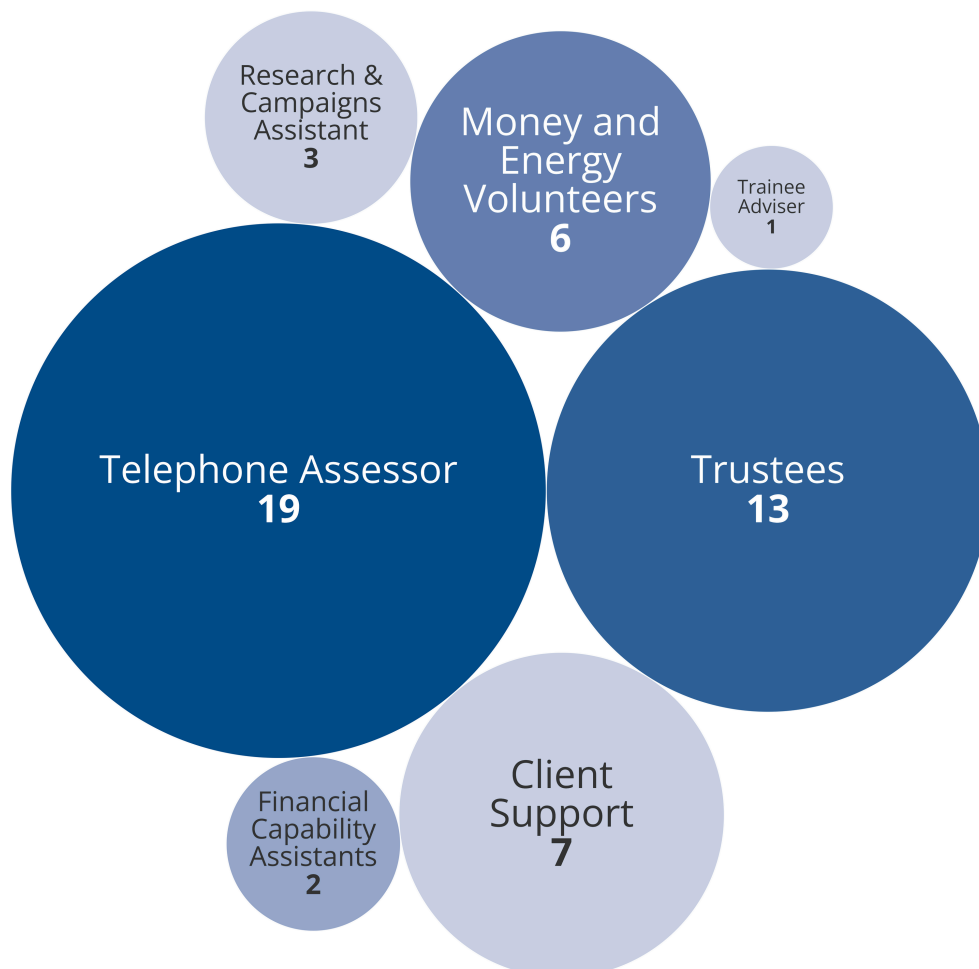
 **53**

Volunteers supported our local community

£387,470

Worth of volunteering hours

Number of Volunteers



Advice in numbers

Our dedicated staff and volunteers have been crucial in empowering individuals and communities to thrive. Over the past 18 months, they've provided information, advice, and casework to **6,423 clients**, while also answering **16,597 calls** through our helpline.

Our clients

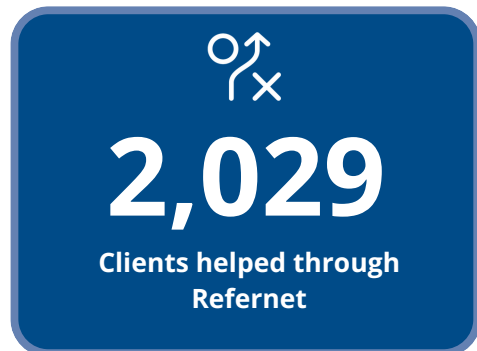
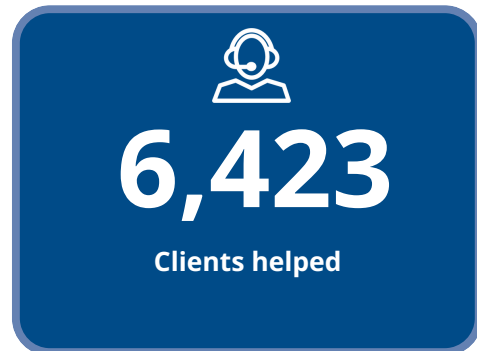
Our clients predominantly represent the Global Majority, with **63% from Black and Minority Ethnic communities**, emphasising our reach into diverse populations. Additionally, **62% of our clients manage long-term health issues or disabilities** and **61% are women**. This underscores our commitment to serving underserved and vulnerable groups facing significant challenges.

Referral pathways

The Westminster Refernet Partnership now consists of **40 community organisations**. So far 2,029 clients received help through referrals, demonstrating the power of collaborative, coordinated effort among different service providers.

Accessibility

We have improved face to face accessibility through **new** pre-booked Advice Shop sessions and with **new** outreach locations across Westminster. We see clients at **24 different locations** across the borough, with **66%** of our clients finding it easy to reach us. People access our services in various ways:



Our advice is effective

Problems rarely happen in isolation and can lead to severe consequences if left unresolved. By addressing these issues, we prevent situations from escalating further.

Over the last 18 months we have secured **£4.6m in financial gain**; this is a transformative change that can uplift households, alleviate stress, and provide a pathway to more stable living conditions.

£4,605,863

Income gain for clients (benefit increases, charitable awards, reimbursements & other financial awards)

£148,197

In debts written off

The difference we make

The wider impact of advice – what we achieve as a result of solving problems and providing support – is just as important.

If left unsolved, problems don't just affect the individual – they affect our community. Solving them creates considerable value to society.



7 in 10 people say their problem was solved following advice



86% could not have resolved their problem without CAW



8 in 10 people say we helped them find a way forward



75% clients satisfied with our service



82% say they felt less stress, depressed or anxious as a result of the help they received from us

By continuing to adapt, collaborate, and focus on those most in need, we can look forward to even more impactful work in the future.

Our value to society

Maximising the income for those we help prevents more costly intervention.

This helps **reduce financial difficulty, promotes inclusion and benefits the economy.**

This is only one fraction of our true value.

We also:

- help clients negotiate local processes, such as welfare reform changes
- help local authority rent and council tax arrears to be rescheduled, and reduce the associated administrative costs



**£13 saved
for every
£1 invested**

Our savings to the public purse include:

£446k

saved by the DWP, by keeping people in work

£482k

saved by NHS, by reducing use of mental health and GP services, and keeping people in work

£291k

saved by the local authority by preventing homelessness and housing evictions

£1.9m

in savings to the government and public benefits (fiscal benefits)

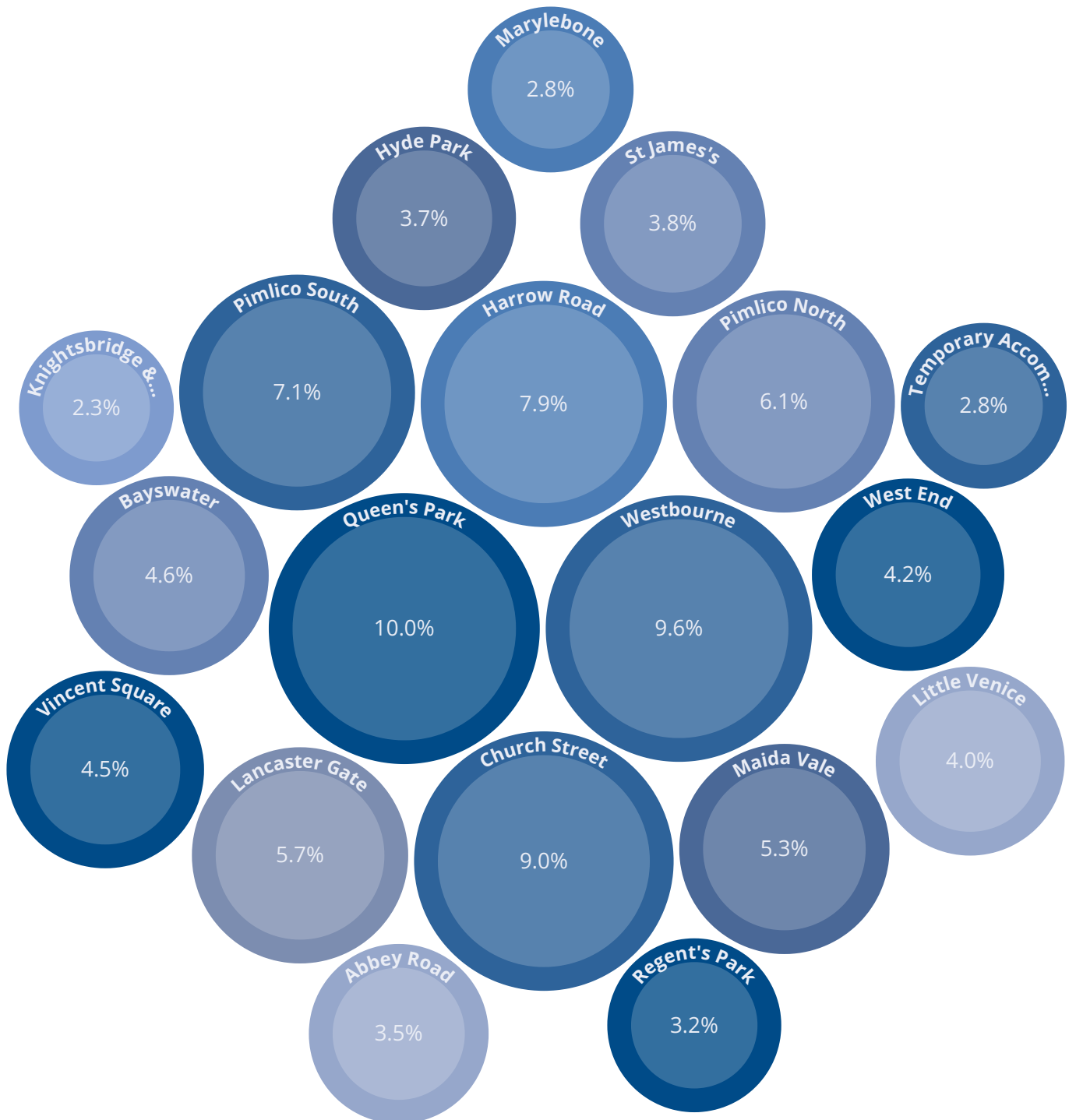
£21.3m

in wider **economic and social benefits** (public value)

£9.8m

in financial value to the people we help (specific outcomes to individuals)

Where we've helped



Who we've helped



Clients are women



Clients are Global Majority
(from Black and Minority Ethnic
Communities)



Clients have a long-term health
condition or are disabled



Martin

"I was put in touch with staff who went above and beyond what I expected"

Ali

"I really appreciate you helping me and my family, saving us from being evicted"

Shannon

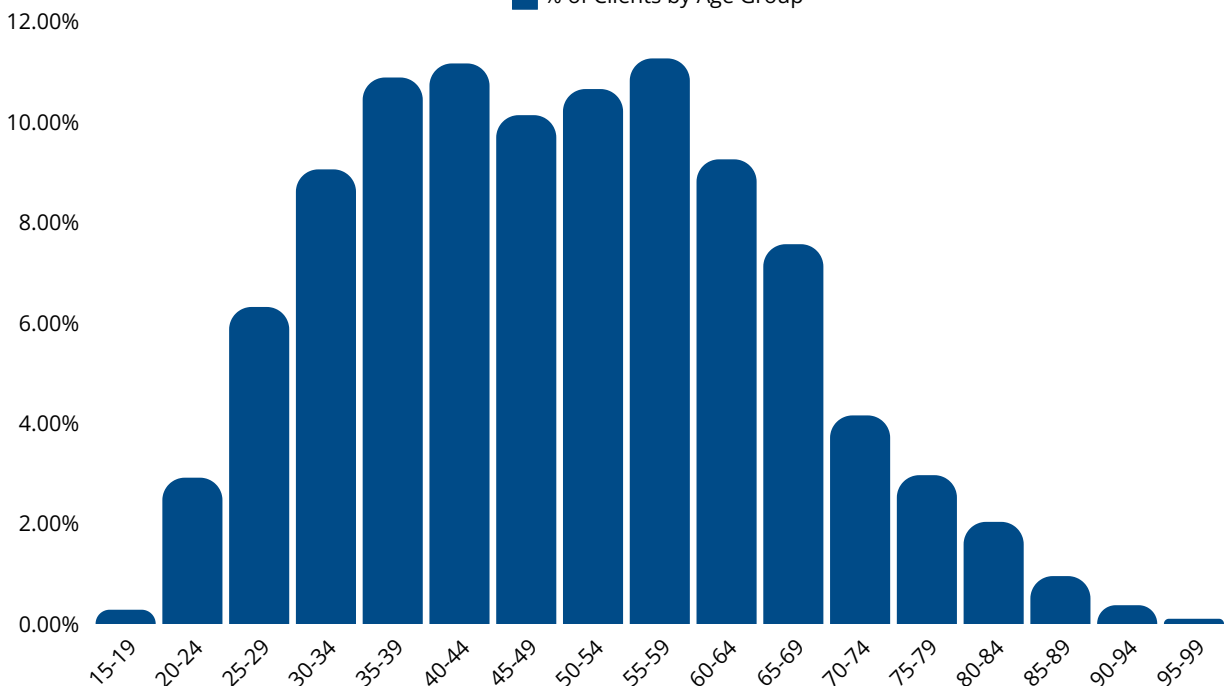
"I really much appreciated your great guidance, knowledge, assistance and understanding."

I am so full of gratitude."

Bruna

"Thank you for an amazing advice shop service"

■ % of Clients by Age Group



This is Tim...

Tim* is an example of one of the people we helped.

Over the past 18 months, we **supported 2,145 people** with housing issues.

Tim's story shows how we help people solve their problems, and why this is important.

Tim, 60+ diagnosed with diabetes, was experiencing homelessness when he first contacted us from a park bench. He had no place to stay and was running out of funds from his Universal Credit.

After we contacted the local authority on his behalf, they provided him with one night of emergency accommodation but didn't provide further support, stating that he was not in priority need and should seek help from family.

Tim was left in a difficult position, unsure of how to pay for more nights in the hotel. Through our continued casework, highlighting his health conditions and vulnerability, the council reconsidered their decision.

Eventually, Tim was offered a council property, providing him with a secure and stable home. His story demonstrates the critical role we play in ensuring that vulnerable individuals receive the support they need, especially when navigating complex housing issues.

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



Our impact

 **33**

Clients averted from
homelessness

 **192**

Clients feel more positive about
their future

 **4,550**

Clients with improved health
after receiving support

 **570**

Clients had increased knowledge
regarding their rights and responsibilities

This is Agata...

Agata* is an example of one of the people we helped.

Over the past 18 months, **we supported 3,629 people** with benefits issues.

Agata's story shows how we help people solve their problems, and why this is important.

Agata, a 56-year-old mum of two, faced severe financial hardship when her Universal Credit claim was unexpectedly closed. Working part-time as a cleaner, she struggled to support her son, an apprentice with a low income, and her daughter, a university student living away from home. This led to poverty and mounting Council Tax debt, resulting in bailiff involvement.

A Citizens Advice Westminster adviser intervened on Agata's behalf, securing a face-to-face Universal Credit appointment due to her limited English. They also recalled her Council Tax account from the bailiffs and successfully had £223 in charges written off, leaving her with a credit balance of £334.

With her Universal Credit claim now reinstated and her financial situation stabilising, Agata no longer fears the bailiffs and is less reliant on food banks.

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



Our impact

 **238**

Emergency food referrals made

 **100**

Benefit award increases following a revision or appeal

 **489**

New benefit awards or increases

 **49**

Debt write offs

Citizens Advice Westminster helps people find a way forward.

We provide free, confidential and independent advice to help people overcome their problems. We are a voice for our clients and consumers on the issues that matter to them.

We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment.

We're here for everyone.



[westminstercab.org.uk](https://www.westminstercab.org.uk)