

Over a period of four years, between 2018 and 2022, the service received around 50,000 referrals. The report found that referrals increased by 100% during the pandemic, and have remained 50% above pre-pandemic numbers, suggesting that the service has increased its reach to those impacted by health inequalities. Moreover, the report found that welfare advice supports the healthcare service as well, with 60% of GPs finding a difference in the number of repeat visits from patients who received welfare support.

Clients are predominantly supported with welfare benefits, followed by debt management and housing. There has also been an increase in clients with children who need support with the increasing costs of childcare. Trends between 2018 and 2022 show that the increase in as housing and cost of living. In 2018, welfare advice raised £4.2 million of income and helped reschedule or write off £1.8 million of primarily priority debts for the clients. The service also benefited local authorities, with data showing that welfare advice saved them £1.05 million.

Having the advice service provided by a well-known and trusted organization also allows clients to engage with the service; a report by Citizens Advice in 2018 found that 79% of the public were familiar with the service. With the service also being located at GP practices that the clients are familiar with, the service can engage with those most in need to support. Being based at healthcare settings also allows for better working relationships between the welfare advisors and healthcare staff, who can see the impact the service has on their patients.

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