



Ministry
of Justice

Legal Support for Litigants in Person Grant (LSLIP)

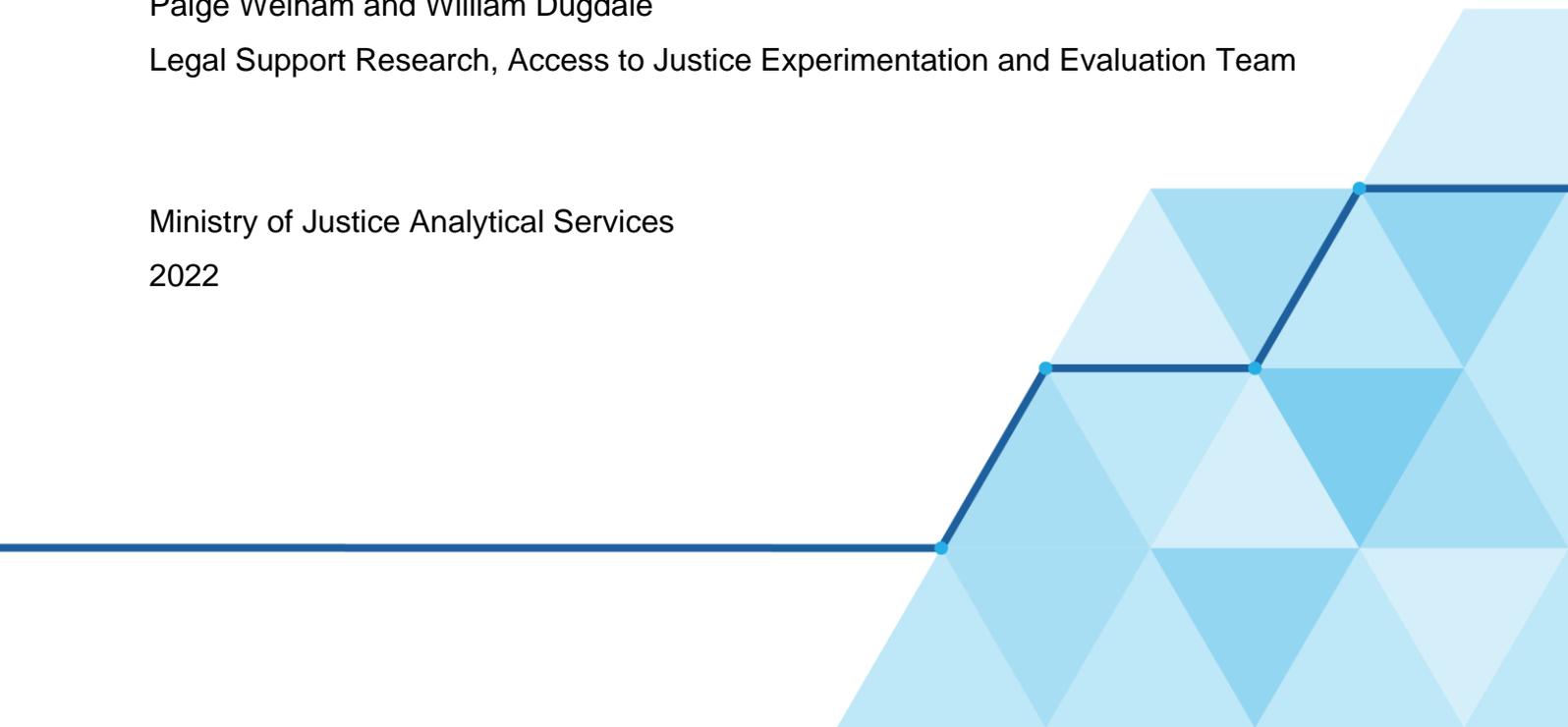
Mid-Grant Review, December 2021

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Ministry of Justice Analytical Services

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Paige Welham and William Dugdale

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1. Executive Summary

In April 2020, the Access to Justice Foundation and Ministry of Justice launched the Legal Support for Litigants in Person Grant (LSLIP), a two-year grant programme funding a range of earlier intervention services for litigants in person.

The grant is funding 11 projects across England and Wales that deliver advice on a national, regional and local scale, to litigants in person at different stages of their problem within several areas of civil and family law. At the core of all these activities is partnership working and earlier intervention, to achieve improved outcomes for clients.

To build up a collective evidence base of the benefits the programme is delivering, each grantee has collected and reported a range of quantitative and qualitative data regarding the advice they have provided, the clients reached and the impact this advice has had on key outcomes of interest.

This interim report draws together the data and evidence collected so far, to report on progress towards the three objectives of the grant. This report is not necessarily an accurate indicator of performance at this stage, but an indicative progress report to review the data collected thus far and identify any critical issues.

Key findings

Grantees worked with dedication to set up their services at pace and quickly started helping litigants in person. All partners expressed great pride at how quickly their LSLIP services were set up and able to start providing support to clients, however this initial set up period was challenging, as organisations were grappling with the effects of Covid-19, recruitment difficulties and the unfamiliar data and evidence requirements. With support from the Access to Justice Foundation, the grantees quickly overcame these issues and services are now starting to reach full capacity.

The national grantees have provided a blend of legal advice, practical support and procedural information to people across England and Wales. Between July 2020 and June 2021, LawWorks and the partnership between Support Through Court and RCJ Advice have provided remote advice and support to 2,800 clients with a range of civil and family problems. In that same period, LSLIP has also supported the delivery of the Support Through Court National Helpline, which has given information and guidance to 4,000

clients, and supported the delivery of Law for Life's Advicenow website which has had over 750,000 users access its resources.

The local and regional grants started 3 months later, and between October 2020 and June 2021, LSLIP local and regional grantees have advised 7,700 clients with 8,300 legal issues. The majority of these issues (nearly 75%) have been family, employment or housing problems. These were areas that many grantees sought funding for, as they were identified as areas where organisations had a gap in their service delivery and/or areas where it was expected that there would be an increase in demand for advice as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Grantees are starting to see demand for advice increase, as restrictions ease and certain sources of support (such as the uplift to Universal Credit) come to an end.

Most advice provided by local and regional grantees on these issues has been initial generalist advice (68%), however substantial volumes of casework and pre-court advice have been provided. The types of advice provided varies between different areas of law, reflecting how the pathway to resolution is not universal across all problem types and certain issues may require greater engagement with the formal justice system.

Broadly speaking, local and regional grantees appear to be reaching a similar cohort of users to Citizens Advice. Most clients are female (62%), between 25 and 55 (65%), and white (91%). At least a quarter of clients disclose that they have a disability, but there is evidence to suggest this is an underestimation and that a higher volume of clients have poor physical and mental health and have other indicators of vulnerability. There is some variation in the characteristics of clients amongst the areas of law, including the number of clients that prefer not to disclose this information.

Partnership working has been key to LSLIP and the enhanced the support available for litigants in person. By formalising referral pathways between services and sharing specialist resources, grantees have been able to expand the advice available across wider geographical areas and areas of law, to provide a more holistic service that can address the entirety of a client's problem. Close communication, trust and rapport have been key to facilitate this successful partnership working, particularly for partnerships with organisations from different advice networks, that have differing ways of working.

Early evidence suggests that the advice and support is improving client outcomes. The interim data collected by the local and regional grantees suggests that 93% of clients

increased their understanding of their problem and that it might have a legal resolution; 76% were aware of any action that they needed to take to resolve their problem; 66% had increased confidence and ability to take this action; 62% of issues were resolved before court or tribunal; 83% of those that did go to court or tribunal had a better understanding of what to expect; and 81% gave a positive assessment of the support and outcome.

These findings are based on interim data with varying sample sizes, so more data is required to support these conclusions. Further data will be collected throughout the lifetime of LSLIP and these trends will be monitored. Experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation methods were explored but were not deemed proportionate due to the complexity of these methods and the resource they would have required during the pandemic, so further evidence is needed in order to confidently attribute these outcomes to the advice and generalise these findings.

The mid-grant review analyses the data collected by local and regional grantees in aggregate, in order to balance detail with brevity at this stage of the grant. **Over the next year, the priority for the evaluation will be to explore the different LSLIP delivery models in more depth, the outcomes they are achieving and whether they can be replicated or scaled up.**

Although social distancing restrictions have prevented this from occurring previously, Ministry of Justice colleagues welcome the opportunity to visit organisations to see LSLIP services first-hand, if permitted to do so in the coming months.

2. Introduction

In February 2019, the Ministry of Justice published the Legal Support Action Plan¹ which outlined the Government's commitment to a new vision for legal support, based on earlier intervention. To enable this vision, the Legal Support Action Plan contained several commitments to pilot and evaluate different forms of early legal support, to better understand what interventions work best, when, and for whom. Among these commitments was the pledge to increase the Ministry of Justice funding for the Litigants in Person Support Strategy to £3 million for two years.

To deliver this funding, the Ministry of Justice partnered with the Access to Justice Foundation, an organisation with significant experience managing grants to the advice sector. The Access to Justice Foundation manages the Litigants in Person Support Strategy, which the Ministry of Justice has provided with £1.45m funding per year since 2015, and the Community Justice Fund, which the Ministry of Justice recently provided with £4.4m² to support the advice sector throughout the pandemic.

The two organisations worked closely together to develop the Legal Support for Litigants in Person Grant programme (LSLIP), which enhances the legal support available across England and Wales by funding new, expanded or scaled-up services that support the earliest possible interventions for litigants in person. LSLIP was formally launched in April 2020, with three central objectives:

1. Enhance services that support the earliest possible interventions for litigants in person, reducing the risk of their problems escalating.
2. Develop our understanding of how and when litigants in person access different services, to help ensure that services are designed around the people who need to use them.
3. Build an evidence base of what works and what doesn't, by evaluating the effectiveness of the support delivered by the new grant to litigants in person.

¹ The Legal Support Action Plan 'The Way Ahead - An action plan to deliver better support to people experiencing legal problems' available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/777036/legal-support-the-way-ahead.pdf

² An additional £3m was granted to the Law Centres Network, bringing the total funding for the advice sector as part of the Covid Specialist Advice Service Scheme up to £7.4m.

Evaluation is therefore a key element of the grant, so that the Ministry of Justice and Access to Justice Foundation can build up a collective evidence base of the benefits they are delivering to litigants in person, in partnership with the advice sector. Each grantee has made significant efforts towards evidence gathering, collecting a range of quantitative and qualitative data regarding their clients, the advice they have provided and the impact this advice has had on key outcomes of interest. This report draws together all the data and evidence collected between July 2020 and June 2021, to report on progress towards the three objectives of the grant and provide some insight into benefits achieved for litigants in person as a result of the funding. Data will continue to be collected for the remainder of the grant period, with a full report prepared in Autumn 2022.

It is important to note that the launch of LSLIP coincided with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has had wide ranging economic and social impacts on legal need, the advice sector and the wider justice landscape. It has been critical to take an open and flexible approach to the programme, in order to be mindful of the impact of Covid-19 on the sector and allow organisations to be responsive to the shifting environment. The advice sector has swiftly adapted services to continue to help some of the most vulnerable people in society during this uncertain time.

3. Grant structure

3.1 Funded organisations

Key Points

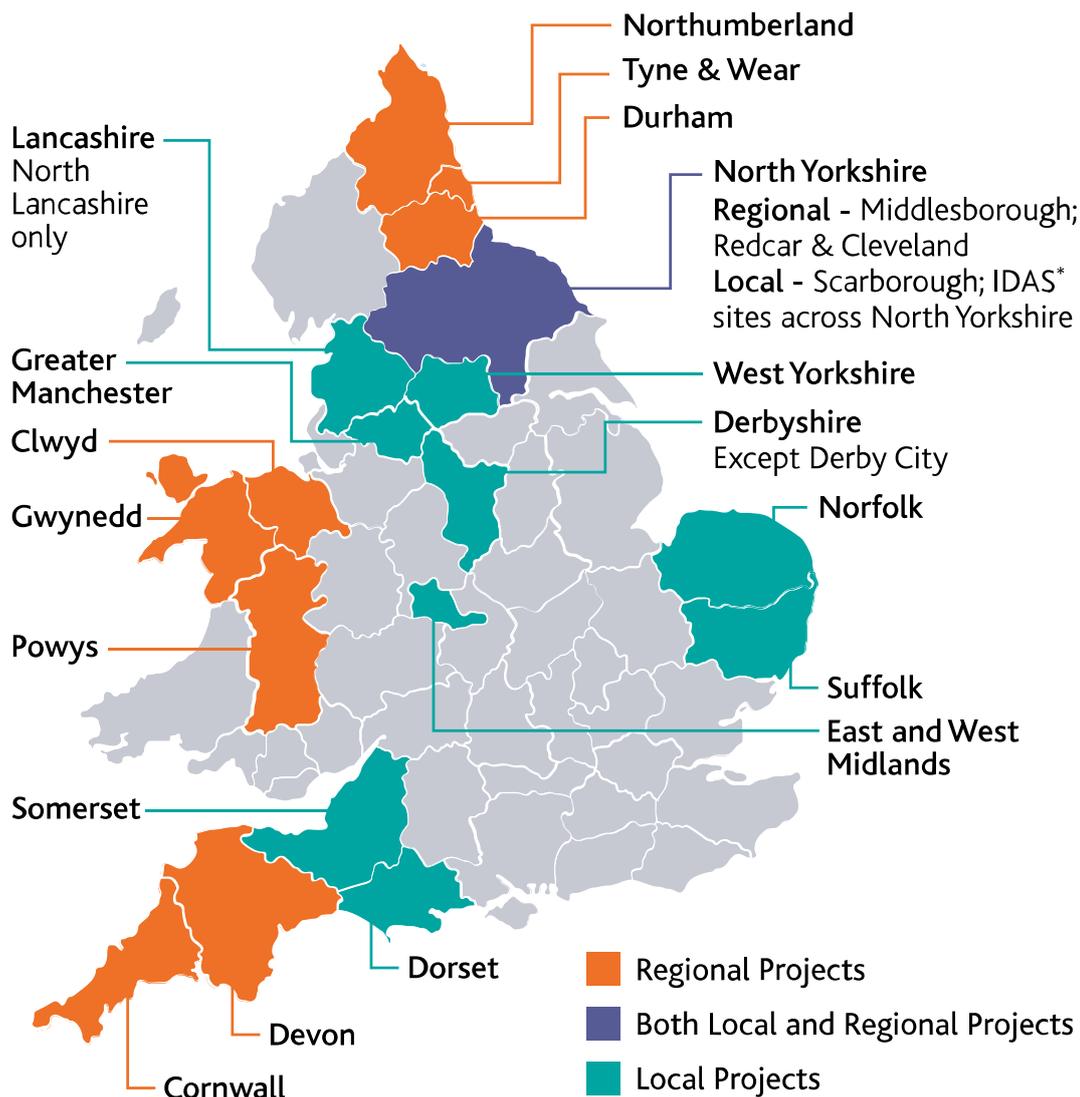
- Eleven grants were funded by LSLIP to provide a range of advice services at a local, regional and national level across England and Wales.
- Grantees provided services to litigants in person across multiple areas of civil and family law and reported activities in four key stages to capture the volume of advice at various stages of their problem resolution journey and the impact of these different forms of advice.

LSLIP has funded a range of advice services at a local, regional and national level. This framework was set with the view that interventions at all three levels are beneficial to enhance the support and advice available for litigants in person across England and Wales.

| There are 11 LSLIP grants in total | | |
|--|--|--|
| Five local grants | Three regional grants | Three national grants |
| These grants scale up the provision of organisations around the country that are already working with litigants in person in multiple areas of civil and family law. | These grants develop services for litigants in person in geographic areas where there are gaps in provision, building up coordinated networks across a region. | These grants fund services that can deliver information, guidance and/or advice across England and Wales, using remote delivery methods. |

The local and regional grants are being delivered in areas across England and Wales, as demonstrated in Figure 1. The national grantees are not depicted in this map, but have national coverage, so people with civil and family issues across England and Wales can access a LSLIP funded service.

Figure 1: A map of England and Wales illustrating the geographical coverage of the local and regional LSLIP partnerships



The LSLIP programme invited a select cohort of advice organisations to bid for funding for advice services that would enhance their current service offering and meet the needs of their local areas, in recognition that each locality will have different advice needs, depending on the local population and the services already available. As a result, grantees are providing a range of services across multiple areas of civil and family law.

Table 1 provides an overview of the 11 LSLIP grants, the lead organisation for each partnership, the number of organisations delivering advice within each partnership, and the primary areas of law each grantee is providing advice in. Many of these partnerships are also providing small volumes of advice outside of their areas of focus. More detail about these partnerships is provided on p.17.

Table 1: An overview of the 11 LSLIP grants, their lead partners and areas of focus

| Funded project | | | | Areas of focus | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|------------|---------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Funding stream | Partnership name | Lead partner | Delivery partners | Family | Employment | Housing | Welfare Benefits | Discrimination | Community Care |
| Local | Dorset and South Somerset | Citizens Advice Central Dorset | 9 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| | Mid and North Yorkshire | Citizens Advice Mid-North Yorkshire | 4 | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| | East and West Midlands | Central England Law Centre | 2 | | ✓ | | | | |
| | Suffolk and Norfolk | Suffolk Law Centre | 2 | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| | Greater Manchester and Lancashire | Greater Manchester Law Centre | 2 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Regional | North East | North East Law Centre | 13 | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| | North and Mid Wales | Citizens Advice Ynys Mon | 8 | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| | Devon and Cornwall | Citizens Advice Teignbridge | 9 | ✓ | | | | | |
| National | Support Through Court and RCJ Advice | Support Through Court and RCJ Advice | 2 | ✓ | | | | | |
| | Law Works | Law Works | 1 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Law for Life | Law for Life | 1 | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | |

Table 2 outlines the broad scope of these areas of law, with illustrative examples of problems in these areas. Whilst this categorisation is helpful to gain a broad understanding of the types of problems experienced, some problems are not discrete and intersect with one or several other areas of law. For example, an employment problem, such as unfair dismissal, may be due to discrimination. It is also common³ for some people to experience several inter-related legal problems (also known as a cluster of issues) across a number of areas of law. Therefore, there may be some variation in how these issues are categorised and recorded by organisations.

³ The most recent MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey in 2014-15 found that half of all adults with a legal problem had experienced more than one issue. These findings are available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596490/legal-problem-resolution-survey-2014-to-2015-findings.pdf

Table 2: The 10 areas of civil and family law in which advice is offered by LSLIP grantees, with illustrative examples of problems in these areas

| Area of law | Scope |
|--------------------------|--|
| Housing | Housing issues can include being threatened with eviction and/or possible homelessness, problems with rent arrears, mortgage repayments, handling a problem with a landlord or generally seeking support for a housing related issue. |
| Family | Family issues can be in relation to divorce, separation or ending a civil partnership, dealing with finances or property arrangements after a separation, making or getting help with child arrangements or matters relating to a death or will. |
| Employment | Work-related problems include being unfairly dismissed or made redundant, facing discrimination, an accident at work or dealing with a grievance or disciplinary action. Recently, this includes issues with the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme (or 'furlough'). |
| Welfare Benefits | Problems with benefits and tax credits can include challenging benefit decisions, benefit overpayments or problems related to accusations of benefit fraud. |
| Debt | Debt problems can include the inability to afford bill or debt payments including council tax or utility bills, repaying a mortgage or tax debt, dealing with rent arrears, dealing with actions from creditors, and generally improving financial capability. |
| Discrimination | These problems relate to different forms of direct or indirect discrimination. This includes discrimination relating to a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. |
| Domestic Violence | These matters involve abusive or violent behaviour from a family member, partner or ex-partner, including harassment, stalking, trafficking, financial control, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and 'honour-based' abuse. |
| Immigration | Immigration issues can relate to applying for settled status, problems with a visa or visa application, accessing services or benefits when subject to immigration control, receiving asylum or refugee support, victims of trafficking or forced labour, or dealing with a possible deportation. |
| Community Care | These are issues related to people who receive community care, including disabled or vulnerable people, a family member of a disabled adult or child, and carers. Specific issues can include the closure of care facilities, withdrawal or a reduction to the level of care being provided, failure to carry out a community care assessment or provide an adequate level of care following an assessment, and lasting Power of Attorney and Guardianship issues. |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Public Law | These are issues related to certain failings of a public authority to act in accordance with relevant public law principles and rules. Specific issues can include challenging the decision-making process of a public body, following a complaints procedure, appealing a decision, administrative review or mandatory reconsideration, and judicial review. |
|-------------------|---|

The grantees have not been set targets for the number of clients that they must reach during the grant period, to allow them the space to develop their advice models and adopt a test and learn approach. This has also provided organisations with the flexibility to respond to the changing levels of legal need arising throughout the pandemic, such as an increase in demand for legal help in areas of family, housing, employment and debt.

However, in order to capture the volume of advice provided to litigants in person at various stages of their problem resolution journey, and the impact of these different forms of advice, grantees have been asked to report their activities in each area of law in four key stages. These stages have been adapted from the stages of legal advice defined by the Advice Service Alliance⁴. Making this distinction has helped to capture client volumes, client characteristics and the outcomes associated with different forms of advice in a consistent way.

The earlier stages support clients through triage, generalist advice, casework and signposting and referrals to resolve their issues before a court or Tribunal case has been initiated. These referrals are often internal to specialist advisers within the partnership organisations, included those funded by LSLIP and those that are a part of their broader services. The later stages support litigants in person with advice and support before court and at court, once a court or Tribunal case has been initiated. Table 3 provides more detail on these four stages of advice.

⁴ See: <https://asauk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Definitions-to-help-you-understand-the-advice-sector.pdf>

Table 3: The four stages of advice provided by LSLIP grantees

| Before engagement with the formal justice system | | During engagement with the formal justice system | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Stage 1 Generalist advice and triage | Stage 2 Casework | Stage 3a Pre-court advice, guidance and support | Stage 3b Legal advice and representation at court |
| Engaging people who may have a legal remedy to their problem/s but are unaware of this. Resolving the causes of their financial hardship or civil legal problem at the earliest opportunity through skilled triage to diagnose the problem/s followed by initial generalist advice. | Providing casework to the most vulnerable clients who approach advice agencies about possible action, uncovering all their legal needs to resolve problem clusters before a court case becomes necessary. | Providing advice, guidance and support to enable litigants in person to better represent themselves in court. This includes advising on how to prepare any necessary court documents, comply with court directions and comport themselves in the court room. | Providing clients with legal advice and representation at court or tribunal. |

3.2 Local funding stream

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| <p>Key Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local funding stream comprises of five grants which support and scale up the provision of organisations already working with litigants in person in multiple areas of civil and family law. • A total of 19 organisations are involved in the delivery of these grants including Citizens Advice offices, Law Centres, and other community-based support services. |
|--|

East and West Midlands

The partnership between Central England Law Centre and Derbyshire Law Centre provides advice and support on employment issues. The partnership increases the capacity of the casework service, enabling a wider geographical reach, to include the High Peak Borough Council area in Derbyshire and around Birmingham and Coventry.

| |
|--|
| <p>Areas of law Employment</p> <p>Lead Organisation Central England Law Centre</p> <p>Delivery Partners Derbyshire Law Centre</p> |
|--|

The project covers activities at all four advice stages. This includes: a telephone helpline that helps clients to identify if there is a legal remedy and provides support to achieve an outcome without starting legal proceedings; casework support for clients who are more vulnerable and need additional support to navigate the legal process; constructive advice and assistance pre-Tribunal; and representation at Tribunal for more vulnerable clients.

Dorset and South Somerset

The Dorset and South Somerset partnership has been funded to employ or increase the capacity of specialist caseworkers in the areas of employment, housing, family and race discrimination. The programme increases the level of collaboration between local services, to coordinate generalist triage across all partners and expand referral routes, so that specialist advice is accessible across Dorset and South Somerset.

The partnership utilises the expertise of caseworkers to train specialist volunteer advisers and to provide consultancy and support, to expand their capacity and provide longer-term sustainability. The partnership draws on the particular expertise and perspectives of Shelter and the Dorset Race Equality Council, to increase the breadth and depth of advice.

Areas of law

Family, Employment, Housing, Discrimination

Lead Organisation

Citizens Advice Central Dorset

Delivery Partners

1. Citizens Advice Bridport
2. Citizens Advice East Dorset
3. Citizens Advice Purbeck
4. Citizens Advice South Somerset
5. Shelter Dorset
6. Shelter Bristol
7. Citizens Advice Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole
8. Dorset Race Equality Council

Suffolk and Norfolk

The partnership between Suffolk Law Centre and Norfolk Community Law Service provides advice on family, employment, housing and discrimination issues. It scales up the rural outreach service, piloted with previous funds from the Access to Justice Foundation, and increases the availability of specialist casework and legal advice.

Areas of law

Family, Employment, Housing, Discrimination

Lead Organisation

Suffolk Law Centre

Delivery Partners

Norfolk Community Law Service

Outreach is delivered via the 'Justice Bus', a mobile triage and specialist advice service reaching across the two counties. The mobile service delivers initial legal advice in trusted places that people already go to, such as libraries and food banks. The triage officers can

then refer clients with more complex cases to the specialists within the partnership, whereby they can receive specialist casework and legal advice before court and at court.

Mid and North Yorkshire

The Mid and North Yorkshire partnership has been funded to employ, train and increase the capacity of housing, family and discrimination specialist caseworkers.

The service uses a 'hub-and-spoke' model, whereby clients can access support from one of the centrally-based hubs or via the 'Rural Reach' bus that deliver outreach services in community based locations such as libraries and food banks. Each individual presenting to the service receives an initial assessment by a volunteer or advice trainee, that can identify and diagnose the issue and deliver generalist advice. If required, they are referred to specialist caseworkers that can manage more complex cases and clusters, or to additional support as needed (e.g. mental health services).

Areas of law

Family, Housing, Discrimination

Lead Organisation

Citizens Advice Mid-North Yorkshire

Delivery Partners

1. Citizens Advice Scarborough and District
2. Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre
3. Independent Domestic Abuse Service North Yorkshire

Greater Manchester and Lancashire

The partnership between Greater Manchester Law Centre and Citizens Advice North Lancashire has been funded to deliver an integrated regional advice and information network that can support litigants in person across Lancashire and Greater Manchester.

Based from a community hub in each county, co-ordinators/navigators provide early advice via telephone, email and video to support existing generalist advice. A specialist employment lawyer trains and supervises the provision of this advice, whilst also undertaking specialist casework and litigation support for vulnerable clients or those with complex cases. The project is also developing resources and materials for litigants in person and other community providers.

Areas of law

Employment, Family, Housing, Welfare Benefits, Discrimination

Lead Organisation

Greater Manchester Law Centre

Delivery Partners

Citizens Advice North Lancashire

3.3 Regional funding stream

Key Points

- The regional funding stream comprises of three grants which build coordinated networks across a region with a view to be replicated in other parts of the country.
- A total of 29 organisations are involved in the delivery of these grants including Citizens Advice offices, Law Centres, and a University.

North East

The North East partnership is a consortium of 13 organisations and the largest partnership within LSLIP. The partnership operates two virtual support hubs that provide advice and support on welfare benefits, employment and family problems.

The model involves partners identifying staff with the relevant skills and knowledge and releasing them to the virtual hub for an agreed number of days per week. These staff work from their local office but act as 'virtual hub staff members' whose skills and expertise are available to all delivery partners, who can make referrals via phone, email or an online calendar. The model has a structured coaching and mentoring programme and is designed to increase capacity for specialist advice across the region.

The partnership is also developing a sub project with HMCTS to enable remote/virtual access to a specialist lawyer in Family Law Courts across the North East.

Areas of Law

Family, Employment, Welfare Benefits

Lead Organisation

North East Law Centre

Delivery Partners

1. Citizens Advice Northumberland
2. Citizens Advice Newcastle
3. Citizens Advice North Tyneside
4. Citizens Advice South Tyneside
5. Citizens Advice Sunderland
6. Citizens Advice Gateshead
7. Citizens Advice Durham
8. Citizens Advice Darlington
9. Citizens Advice Stockton
10. Citizens Advice Hartlepool
11. Citizens Advice Middlesbrough
12. Citizens Advice Redcar and Cleveland

North and Mid Wales

The North and Mid Wales partnership is a consortium of seven Local Citizens Advice branches and Bangor University. Family, community care and employment caseworkers have been recruited to address gaps in provision and increase capacity.

The partnership is facilitating a broader and deeper partnership with Bangor University, to enable a higher number of students to volunteer across North and Mid Wales. Students, particularly those studying for specialist modules in employment, community care and family, are supported to assist the specialist caseworkers and increase their legal skills in these

areas of law. This approach aligns with Bangor Law

School's aim of embedding skills into its curriculum and expands provision across the region. The Law School is also conducting research that supports greater understanding of pathways taken by litigants in person and how to ensure services are designed around their needs.

Areas of Law

Family, Employment, Community Care

Lead Organisation

Citizens Advice Ynys Mon

Delivery Partners

1. Citizens Advice Wrexham
2. Citizens Advice Flintshire
3. Citizens Advice Denbighshire
4. Citizens Advice Conwy District
5. Citizens Advice Cyngor Ar Bopeth Gwynedd
6. Citizens Advice Cyngor Ar Bopeth Powys
7. Bangor University (Law School and Social Sciences)

Devon and Cornwall

The Devon and Cornwall partnership is a consortium of nine Local Citizens Advice. The partnership builds on the Citizens Advice Access to Justice Devon pilot project, expanding it across Devon and Cornwall. The project provides specialist casework and preparation for court for clients with family law issues, to meet the increase in demand for advice in relation to relationship breakdown and other family law queries, as a result of Covid-19.

The partnership works with organisations across Devon

and Cornwall by establishing a shared referral network across the two counties that includes Exeter University Law Clinic. To ensure the success of these referrals, the project delivers training to core generalist advisers throughout Citizen Advice offices in Devon and Cornwall, to upskill and increase the ability of volunteers and generalist advisers to identify

Areas of Law

Family

Lead Organisation

Citizens Advice Teignbridge

Delivery Partners

1. Citizens Advice Cornwall
2. Citizens Advice Devon
3. Citizens Advice East Devon
4. Citizens Advice Exeter
5. Citizens Advice Plymouth
6. Citizens Advice Torbay
7. Citizens Advice Torridge, North, Mid and West Devon
8. Citizens Advice South Hams

where a client may benefit from specialist advice. With some provision for face-to-face delivery depending on need and opportunity, advice is primarily delivered via telephone, video conferencing and email.

3.4 National funding stream

Key Points

- The national funding stream comprises of three grants that focus on delivering information, advice, guidance or support to clients across England and Wales using technology and remote means of support.

Support Through Court and RCJ Advice

The partnership between Support Through Court and RCJ Advice facilitates timely referrals between the two services, to broaden the support available to litigants in person. This service enables litigants in person to access practical, emotional and procedural support (from Support Through Court), as well as specialist legal advice (from RCJ Advice).

LSLIP funding supports the expansion of the Support Through Court national phoneline, which provides practical, emotional and procedural support to litigants in person with civil and family problems. The phoneline can also refer callers to sources of legal advice, including several sources of support provided by RCJ Advice, such as CourtNav and Finding Legal Options for Women Survivors (FLOWS). To expand the accessibility of advice, LSLIP has funded RCJ Advice to recruit a family solicitor, to take referrals directly from Support Through Court and provide them with specialist legal advice. Each client can receive up to three advice sessions with the RCJ Advice family solicitor.

Support Through Court had intended to pilot remote 'Safe Space' pods, where litigants in person in the Central London Family Court (CFC) and Nottingham Courts could access a video conference system to remotely contact Support Through Court volunteers and/or the RCJ Advice family solicitor. The 'pods pilot' was revised as continuing Covid-19 challenges prevented the commissioning of the pods. The project instead has focussed on the concept of 'safe-spaces' by ensuring that clients can access advisers and volunteers in CFC and Nottingham Courts, and feel confident that they will not be overheard or intimidated.

To ensure timely and appropriate referrals, Support Through Court volunteers are trained in how to utilise the referral to RCJ Advice effectively, and to build their confidence in using online tools and materials, including Advicenow, CourtNav and Free Legal Answers.

LawWorks

The LSLIP grant has funded LawWorks to support and scale-up their Free Legal Answers website, which is modelled on a similar website operating in the United States. Following a referral from an advice agency or community-based organisation, users of Free Legal Answers describe a legal problem or ask a legal question and will receive advice from a participating pro bono lawyer.

This service enables people aged 18 or over, on low incomes and not eligible for legal aid, to access free, initial legal support for their civil and family problems. Currently, there are pro bono lawyers signed up to the platform with specialisms in family law, housing, employment, consumer and debt, and this network is growing.

Free Legal Answers complements other services that LawWorks provide, including the LawWorks Clinic Network which provides free initial advice to individuals in the area of social welfare law, the Not For Profits Programme which connects small not for profit organisations in need of legal support with the skills and expertise of volunteer lawyers, and the Secondary Specialism project which trains and supports lawyers to provide in-depth advice and representation in under-resourced areas of social welfare law.

Law for Life

The LSLIP grant has funded Law for Life to undertake several activities that can be grouped into three strands of work: enhancing the information and guidance available on their Advicenow website, expanding access to Affordable Advice, and conducting research into how several key Law for Life services build the legal capability of litigants in person and address the barriers they encounter.

Advicenow draws together verified, hand-selected, up-to-date information about the law and rights available on the internet across 350 legal topics, to provide the public with information on rights and the law. LSLIP has funded Law for Life to update several guides across the website and promote these resources, through Adwords and SEO optimisation.

Affordable Advice is a partnership between Law for Life and Resolution, which provides people sorting out their finances after a divorce or going to court over child arrangements a

blend of step-by-step guidance from Advicenow so that they can do most of the work themselves, with fixed fee, unbundled legal advice from Resolution family lawyers at the most crucial or difficult points in the process. LSLIP has funded Law for Life to expand access to this service, to move from a pilot stage into a full-service model.

Lastly, Law for Life have been funded to conduct research into digital and legal capability, to evaluate the impact of digital resources and examine the primary barriers that vulnerable groups face in accessing legal support. This research will be used to inform online education programmes.

3.5 The Community Justice Fund

The initial application stage for the local and regional funding streams was extended, in order to give frontline organisations greater opportunity to form partnerships and adapt their services to the pandemic restrictions.

During this period, the Community Justice Fund (CJF) was created as an emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic, to support and sustain specialist social welfare legal advice services facing unprecedented disruption and rise in demand.

Due to the urgency of the crisis, and the facility provided by CJF to allocate grants at speed, the decision was taken to use LSLIP funding from that initial period to support organisations working with litigants in person through CJF. Grants were made to Norfolk Community Law Service, Citizens Advice Devon, Citizens Advice Middlesbrough, and Citizens Advice North Lancashire. This ensured these key organisations were able to provide specialist services to their communities, whilst their applications to the LSLIP programme were being considered.

Wave 1 and Wave 2 funding rounds of CJF have continued to support select LSLIP grantees with core cost grants, allowing organisations to invest in their infrastructure and core services, whilst working to deliver on the LSLIP objectives.

4. Evaluation approach

4.1 Pre-implementation evaluation planning and scoping

Key Points

- The LSLIP evaluation approach was developed in close partnership between the Ministry of Justice and Access to Justice Foundation. The two organisations defined several key outcomes for the grant, including increasing access to advice, improving legal capability and achieving earlier problem resolution.
- To measure progress against these outcomes, each grantee has been collecting a range of quantitative and qualitative data, which they report to the Ministry of Justice and Access to Justice Foundation on a quarterly basis.

The Ministry of Justice and Access to Justice Foundation worked collaboratively to develop a structured approach to the LSLIP evaluation. Before the grant was launched, the two organisations consulted with relevant stakeholders to develop an overarching logic model for LSLIP (contained in Appendix A), which captures the overall objectives, outcomes and impacts that the grant activities are expected to achieve.

The key LSLIP outcomes of interest relate to increasing access to advice, legal capability, problem resolution, satisfaction with services and outcomes, and the impact on the informal and formal justice system. These outcomes were identified as key differences that LSLIP hoped to achieve for clients in the short and medium term, to improve their ability to resolve their problems at an earlier stage. Further information on these outcomes and indicators is captured in Table 4.

Table 4: Core outcomes measured by LSLIP grantees

| Output/Outcome | Indicator |
|---|---|
| Clients and issues advised per area of law, per stage of advice. | Number of clients and issues advised in each of the ten areas of civil and family law (as outlined in Table 2), broken down by advice stage (as outlined in Table 3). A client is defined as an individual and an issue is defined as a problem in one area of law, such as a problem with a welfare benefits appeal. |
| Client protected characteristics, per area of law. | The age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation of clients with issues in different areas of law, including those that prefer not to say. |

| Output/Outcome | Indicator |
|---|---|
| Increasing access to advice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of clients are able to find appropriate assistance locally or nationally, through advice from the partnership, referrals or signposting. |
| Improving client legal capability. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of clients who understand their current problem and are aware that it might have a legal remedy. • % of clients who have an understanding of the legally possible outcomes of their problem. • % of clients who are aware of any action they must take for the next step of their problem resolution journey. This includes any preparation required before court. • % of clients who report increased confidence and ability to deal with their problems. |
| Achieving problem resolution. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of litigants in person who resolve their problems earlier, avoiding going to court. |
| Improved experiences at court/tribunal. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of clients who report increased understanding of court processes and what to expect when self-representing in court. |
| Clients satisfaction with the advice and the outcome of their problem. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of clients that make a positive self-assessment of the quality of services and outcome of their case. |

Collecting and collating data from across the advice sector is a well-recognised and common challenge, as organisations have different approaches to collecting data, based on varying capability, capacity, case management systems, funding requirements and organisational culture of data collection. A data and learning manager was recruited to the Access to Justice Foundation grant management team to support grantees with their data collection and reporting and ensure data consistency across the LSLIP projects.

The LSLIP outcomes of interest are not routinely measured by the advice sector and therefore required adaptations to existing data collection processes. To ensure the proposals were feasible and could be incorporated into service delivery, the requirements were discussed with a few advice organisations prior to implementation and refined further. The initial proposal was to measure these indicators using client surveys at the end of their cases, but some organisations advised that response rates can be very low (around 15%) and so there was a high risk that only a few results would be gained, which would not be representative. For those grantees that did not use this approach, perception-based indicators were proposed, requiring advisers to observe and assess these client outcomes within advice sessions, using their professional judgement and experience. These perception indicators can suffer from methodological weaknesses

associated with their validity and interpretability, so the Ministry of Justice and the Access to Justice Foundation provided grantees with clear written and verbal guidance and held monitoring and reporting workshops and troubleshooting sessions, to support grantees and seek consistency. However, there is still the possibility that organisations within each partnership have interpreted and operationalised the data collection slightly differently, as some grantees are using surveys, some use adviser-perception indicators, and others use a mix of the two tailored to the different stages of the advice. This may have some bearing on differences in outcomes. This approach will be reflected on in the final evaluation report.

It was not proportionate or feasible to undertake an experimental or quasi-experimental approach or collect data on a comparison group in order to establish causation, due to the complexity associated with these methodologies. The LSLIP programme is grant funding a number of different services, delivered by over 50 organisations, so this would have required disproportionate resource and time from the frontline providers, particularly during Covid-19 where prioritising delivery became particularly important. Further evidence is therefore needed in order to confidently attribute these outcomes to the advice and generalise these findings.

Reporting

Each LSLIP grantee committed to data and evaluation as a key element of their grant activities and developed individual evaluation plans in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and the Access to Justice Foundation, which set out the outcomes they would measure, the data collection requirements and reporting mechanisms for their project.

In line with these evaluation plans, each grantee has been collecting a range of quantitative and qualitative data, which has been used to examine who the grantees have reached, the type of advice provided and the impact the advice has had on the outcomes of interest. This has been reported to the Access to Justice Foundation and Ministry of Justice in three ways:

- 1. Quarterly reports on volumes of clients, protected characteristics and indicators for the outcomes.** On a quarterly basis, each grantee submitted two standardised Excel templates, containing the number of clients assisted with legal problems in each of the ten areas of civil and family law, the number of advice sessions at each of

the four stages of advice, the protected characteristics of these clients, and the outcomes for advice at each stage in each area of law.

2. **Quarterly narrative report.** The grantees also provide a quarterly written update on their service delivery, commenting on any observed trends and providing client case studies.
3. **Semi-structured interviews.** Grantees participated in semi-structured interviews to reflect on their experience of the first year of LSLIP. These interviews covered a number of topics including the project set up and delivery so far, partnership working, interactions with clients and programme management.

4.2 This interim report

Key Points

- The mid-grant reflects on data and evidence collected by the local and regional grantees (between October 2020 and June 2021) and the national grantees (between July 2020 and June 2021).
- The report is not necessarily an accurate indicator of performance at this stage, but an indicative progress report.

This mid-grant report draws together all the data and evidence collected so far, to report on progress towards the three objectives of the grant. This report is not necessarily an accurate indicator of performance at this stage, but an indicative progress report to review the data collected so far and identify any critical issues.

Throughout the report, the local and regional grantee data has been analysed in aggregate, whereas the national grantees are analysed individually. The local and regional grantees capture a consistent set of data which can more easily and appropriately be combined, as there is a degree of likeness between their services in terms of delivery methods and the volume of clients they are supporting. There is a much higher degree of variation in the national grantees, who deliver services at a national level using a range of methods, with some grantees helping a hundred people and others reaching nearly a million. This means it is not always possible or advisable to combine their data. This approach is not reflective of any funding stream or grantee being valued any more highly than another, but to try and get a sense of progress so far at a programme level, balancing detail with brevity.

Whilst there are some similarities between the local and regional services, they are not all providing advice in exactly the same way, and so analysing them as a collective may disguise where certain delivery models are achieving different outcomes. The final evaluation report will explore the different LSLIP delivery models in more depth, the outcomes they are achieving and whether they can be replicated or scaled up.

The national, regional and local grants were not all launched at the same time and so the data in this report corresponds to slightly different timeframes. Data relating to the three national grants corresponds to activities between July 2020 and June 2021, as these three LSLIP grants were launched first. The local and regional grants were launched a few months later, so data relating to their activities corresponds to activities in a slightly shorter timeframe (between October 2020 and June 2021).

For all grantees, these timeframes include the initial set up period for their projects and so will reflect early implementation, including the initial set-up of services, recruitment of advisers, promotion of services and familiarisation with the data collection and reporting. This means that care should be taken when interpreting the figures within this report, as they may not be reflective of services at full capacity and there may be issues associated with early counting anomalies and the bedding in of services and data collection. These factors will be explored in more detail throughout the report and mean that any trends in the data may change for the remainder of the funding period, as services hit their stride.

Rounding convention

The rounding convention within Table 5 has been used throughout this report to protect anonymity and balance accuracy with readability. The percentages are exact and relate to the unrounded figures.

Table 5: LSLIP rounding convention

| Figures between | Rounded to the nearest |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 0 - 1,000 | 10 |
| 1,000 - 10,000 | 100 |
| 10,000 – 100,000 | 1,000 |
| 100,000 + | 10,000 |

5. Advice provided by the LSLIP programme

5.1 Volume of clients and problems advised by LSLIP services

Key Points

- Between October 2020 and June 2021, local and regional grantees advised 7,700 clients on 8,300 legal issues.
- Between July 2020 and June 2021, national grantees LawWorks, Support Through Court and RCJ Advice provided remote advice and support to 2,800 clients. LSLIP also supported the delivery of Support Through Court's National Helpline, which gave information and guidance to around 4,000 clients; supported Advicenow, which had over 750,000 visitors; and supported Affordable Advice, which supported 250 individuals to access solicitor appointments.

This section explores the number of clients and problems that grantees have provided with support as part of their LSLIP services. A client is defined as an individual person and an issue is defined as a problem in one area of law, such as a problem with a welfare benefits appeal. Grantees have made significant efforts to collect and report this data in a consistent manner within their different case management systems and data collection processes, but there still may be instances where this categorisation and recording differs slightly between organisations. For example, the North East partnership (the largest LSLIP partnership) does not currently collect data on Stage 1 clients which may skew the data.

Between October 2020 and June 2021, LSLIP local and regional grantees have advised 7,700 clients⁵ with 8,300 legal issues⁶.

During the first quarter, grantees were focused on establishing their projects, recruiting advisers and setting up data collection processes, which meant that most services did not start delivering advice until November/December 2020.

⁵ Some clients may also have been individuals returning to the organisation for ongoing support or seeking advice on a new problem.

⁶ This reflects advice funded by LSLIP exclusively. These clients may have been advised on other issues as part of the organisations wider service provision, which won't be captured in this data. These figures therefore shouldn't be interpreted as suggesting that each client was experiencing 1.1 issues on average.

Several grantees spoke of how recruiting specialist legal advisers for LSLIP has been challenging, as they are competing with the private sector that can offer more competitive salaries and longer-term contracts, that provide greater stability and security. This is a common issue for advice organisations in receipt of short-term funding. Recent research by the Advice Services Alliance found that the lack of longer-term funding, a shortfall in specialist legal advisers and lack of structured career path all made attracting new talent to the sector and building a sustainable workforce very difficult for advice organisations⁷. To overcome these challenges, many LSLIP grantees looked internally and upskilled junior staff members for their projects. This requires more internal resource to oversee these often less experienced members of staff, but ‘home grow’ skills within their organisations.

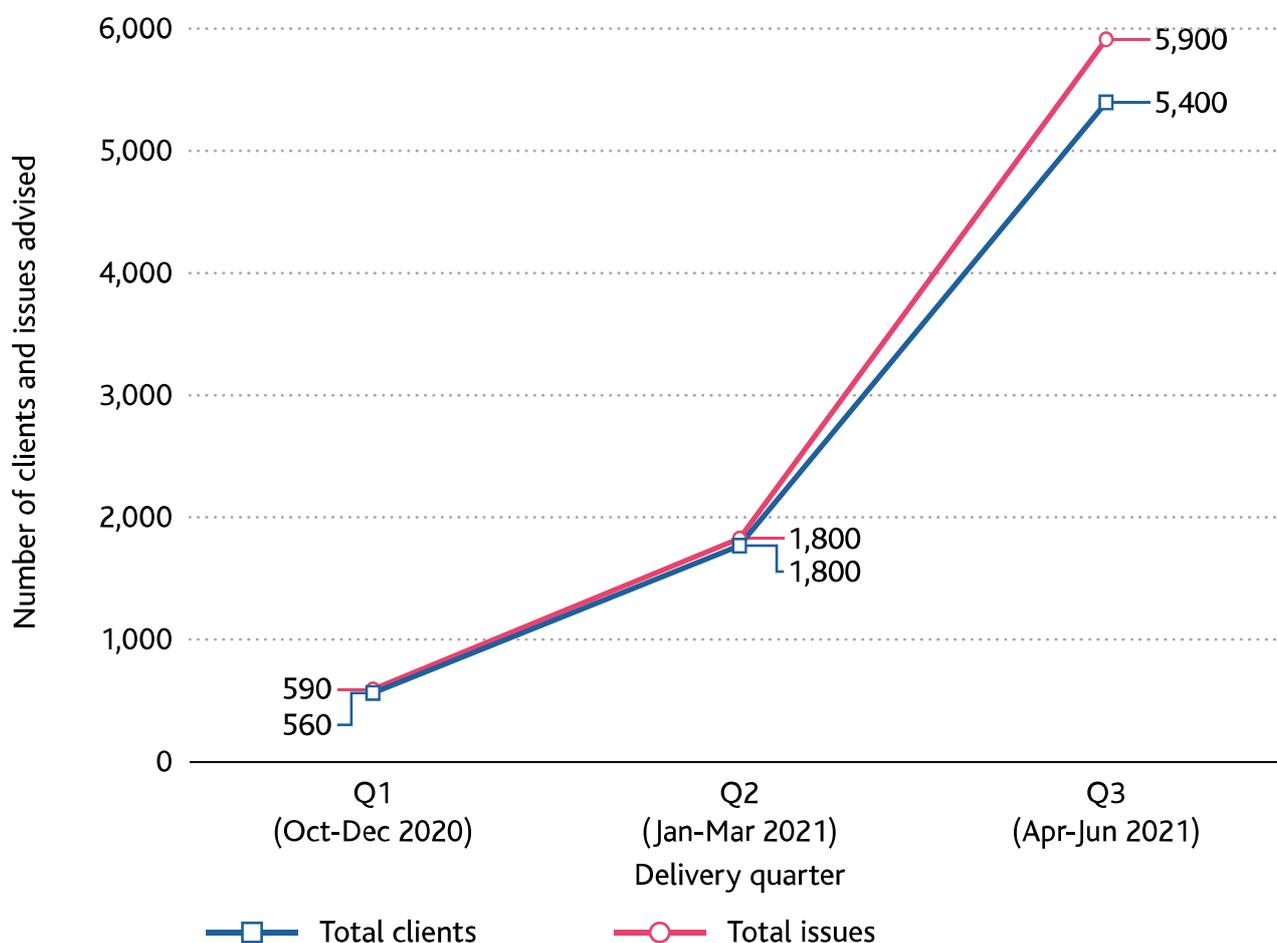
The first quarter also coincided with the Christmas holiday period, the November and Winter lockdowns and a range of other law and policy changes in response to the pandemic, which had an impact on service delivery. Generally, these lockdown periods were a time where frontline organisations had to be agile and constantly adjust their services in response to the pandemic restrictions.

“We intended to run a series of workshops to provide localised and regional upskilling on where to refer clients and services. We were not able to do these workshops intensively because of Covid restrictions but have been able to provide these more widely by virtual and online means and this model has been working well.” (Greater Manchester and Lancashire)

⁷ See: <https://asauk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Building-the-younger-generation-of-advisers.pdf>

Client volumes increased in the second and third quarters, as services started to bed in and reach full capacity. This increase can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Clients and issues advised by local and regional grantees, per delivery quarter



Some grantees specifically attributed the increase in clients to the successful training and upskilling of their staff and volunteers, which has enabled their organisation to triage clients more effectively and provide more in-depth advice at an earlier opportunity.

“We have undoubtedly increased capacity and specialist knowledge across the organisations and all of the caseworkers are fast becoming well-integrated members of the team, doing a job we feel may need to be more long-term than this project...We have had much higher client numbers over this last quarter.”
(Dorset and South Somerset)

Some grantees noted that they had expected a larger volume of clients, but pandemic restrictions and emergency policies put in place (such as the Coronavirus Job Retention

scheme or ‘furlough’⁸, the temporary stay on evictions⁹ and the £20 Universal Credit uplift¹⁰) appear to have delayed the rise in legal issues and demand for advice. However, now restrictions are easing and these policies are coming to an end, demand for advice services is on an upward trajectory with increasing numbers of clients presenting with complex problems or more than one issue. Grantees are anticipating that this demand will continue to increase over the coming months, particularly as face to face appointments resume.

“[We’ve had] lower numbers than expected because of Covid, once furlough ends and the DWP re-introduces their [normal] ways of working it is expected that there will be greater demand.” (North East)

Between July 2020 and June 2021, LawWorks, Support Through Court and RCJ Advice have provided remote advice and support to 2,800 clients.

Free Legal Answers has provided 120 clients with legal advice from participating pro bono lawyers. LawWorks were expecting higher take up of the service and have been taking active steps to increase the number of referral partners and use of the service, including demonstrations to LSLIP partners to explain how the platform works and onboard them as referral agencies. Referrals between the LSLIP partners are explored in more detail later in the report.

Support Through Court LSLIP services have provided practical, procedural and emotional support on family issues, specifically divorce and child arrangements, to 2,700 clients. Nearly half of these clients (1,300) were also signposted to other services, including CourtNav and FLOWS, and 10% (290) received specialist family legal advice from the RCJ Advice lawyer. To support these activities, LSLIP funding has helped to train 130 Support Through Court volunteers to support clients with family court applications and make effective referrals.

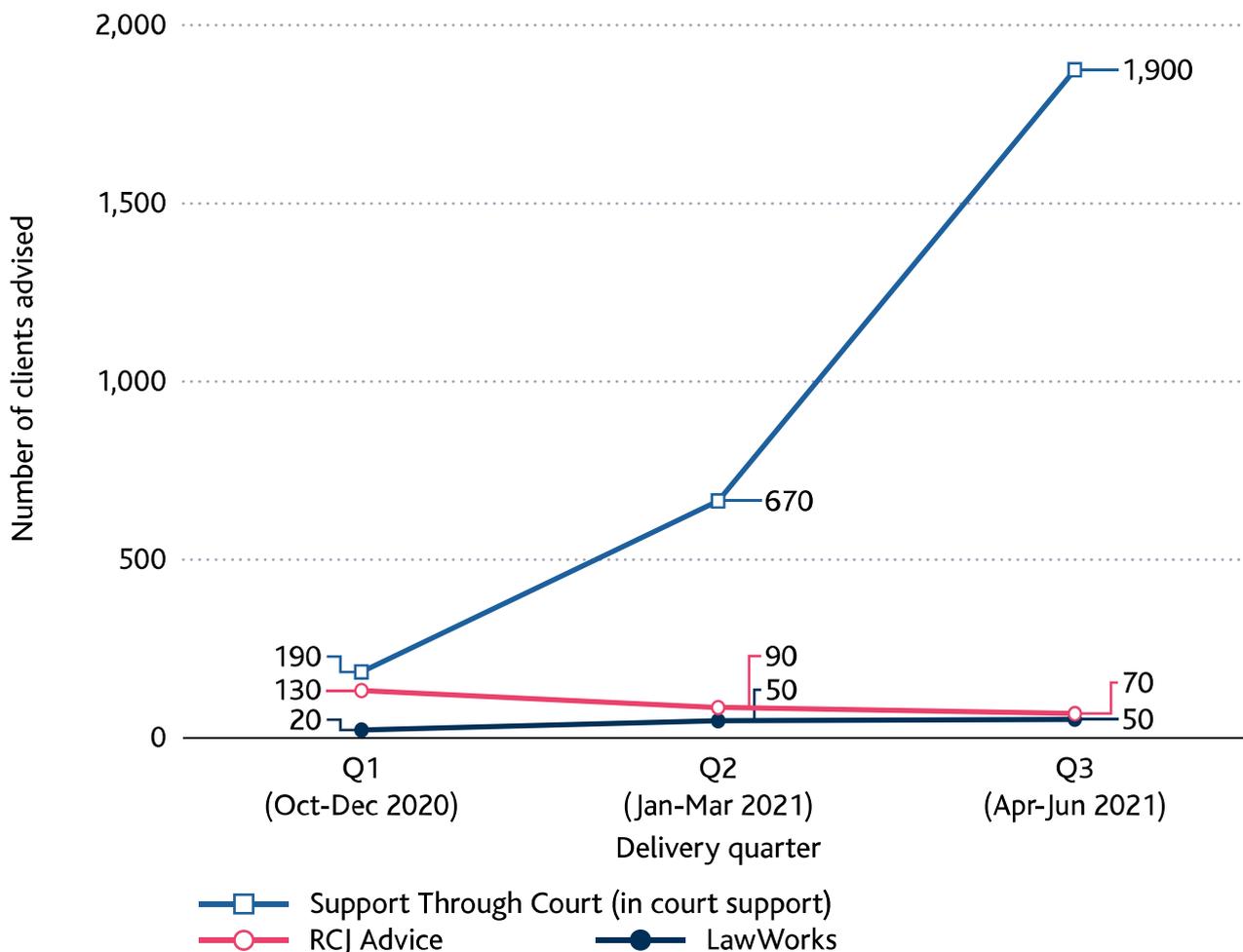
⁸ The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (or ‘furlough’) was set up in March 2020 to help employers pay their workers’ wages during the pandemic. The scheme was introduced in April 2020 and ended in September 2021.

⁹ Temporary housing possession measures were placed during Covid-19. These included: a stay on possession proceedings between 27 March and 20 September 2020; a stay on evictions between 17 November 2020 and 31 May 2021; and extended notice periods between 26 March 2020 and 30 September 2021.

¹⁰ Universal Credit payments were temporary increased by £20 a week in March 2020 until October 2021.

Support Through Court were heavily impacted by the pandemic and the temporarily closure of courts, which meant that the focus of the project was pivoted away from the physical ‘Safe Space’ pods within courts, towards the expansion of remote support to clients. As restrictions have eased over the most recent quarter, there has been a substantial increase in the number of clients supported by Support Through Court at Nottingham, Cardiff, Liverpool and Central Family Courts. This can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Clients advised by Support Through Court, RCJ Advice and LawWorks, per delivery quarter



LSLIP funding has also supported the delivery of the Support Through Court’s National Helpline and Law for Life’s Advicenow website and Affordable Advice service.

It is not possible to reliably attribute the volume of users reached as a direct result of the LSLIP grant as they are funded by several sources. However, between July 2020 and June 2021, Support Through Court’s National Helpline has given information and guidance to around 4,000 clients. In that same period, Law for Life’s Advicenow has had over 750,000 visitors and the Affordable Advice service has enabled 250 individuals to access

appointments with solicitors, by providing clear access points at a lower than average fixed fee service throughout their online guidance. These fixed fee services are the only services within LSLIP that are not free at the point of use for clients.

These sources of support are well established, so the number of users has remained fairly stable throughout the LSLIP grant period thus far. However, they have also been influenced by the same external factors as the local and regional LSLIP services.

5.2 Types of problems advised by LSLIP services

Key Points

- The majority of advice provided by the local and regional grantees has been on family, employment, housing and welfare benefits issues (88%). Most advice has been initial generalist advice.
- The majority of support provided by the national grantees has been on family, employment and housing issues, with the exception of Free Legal Answers, which has had a high proportion of clients with consumer issues.

This section explores the types of advice provided by LSLIP services, including the areas of law and the type of advice provided. Grantees have reported the number of problems advised on in each of the 10 areas of civil and family law, as defined in Table 2, and the volume of advice sessions at each of the four stages of advice, as defined in Table 3.

The majority of advice provided by the local and regional grantees (88%) has been on family, employment, housing and welfare benefits issues.

The LSLIP grant allowed organisations to bid for funding for advice services that would enhance their current service delivery and meet the needs of their local areas. Most grantees sought funding to provide advice on family and employment issues (as detailed in the first section of this report), as these were identified as areas where services had a gap in their service offering and/or areas where it was expected that there would be an increase in demand for advice as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, over half of all advice provided by the local and regional grantees has been on family and employment issues. There have also been substantial amounts of housing and welfare benefits advice provided by LSLIP grantees, comprising 33% of all advice at this stage of the grant.

This is broken down in more detail in Table 6 and Table 7, which show the volume of advice provided across the areas of law. It is important to emphasise that this does not reflect legal need or demand for advice more widely.

Table 6: Volume of issues advised on by local and regional grantees across different areas of law, per delivery quarter

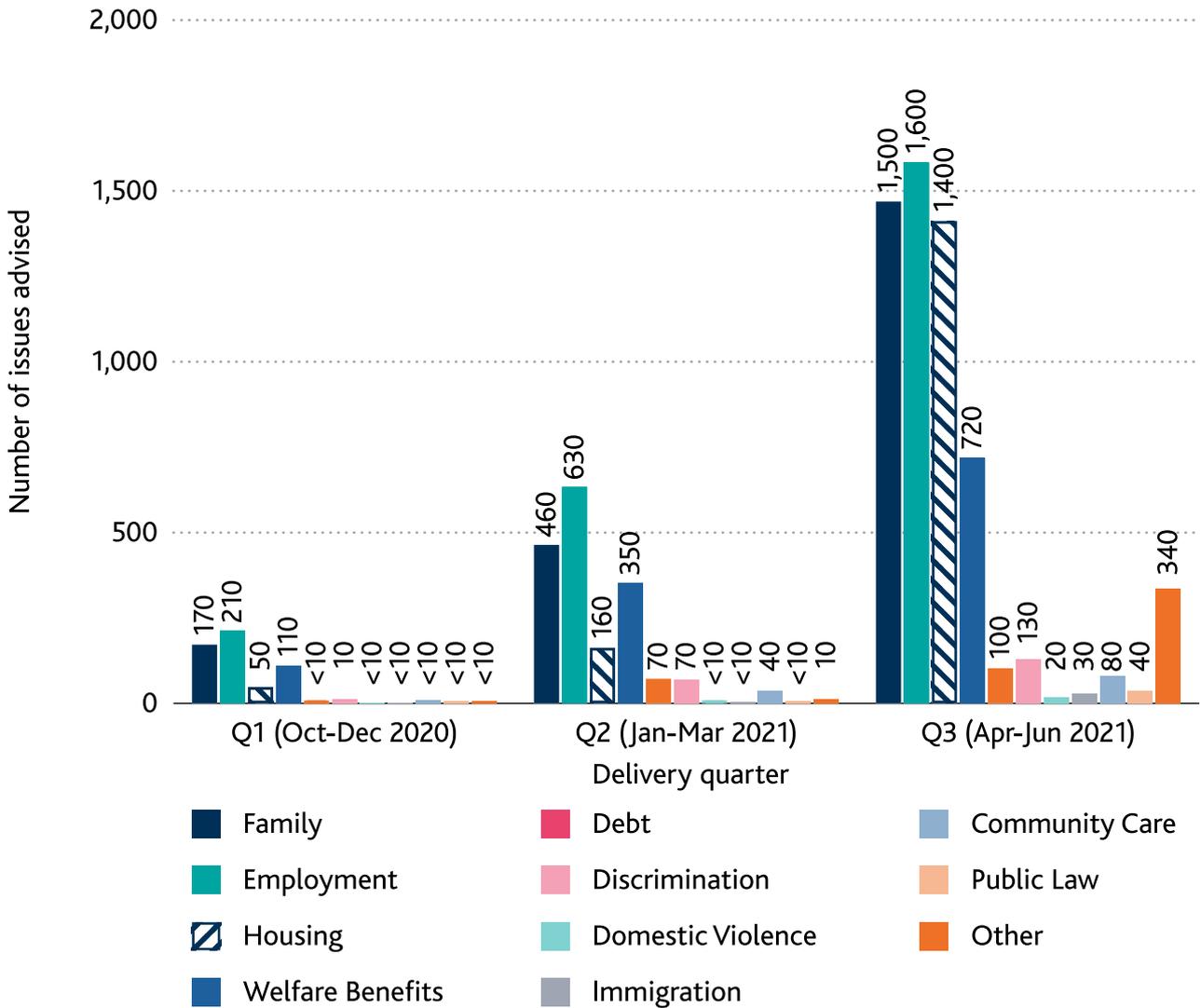
| | Family | Employment | Housing | Welfare Benefits | Debt | Discrimination | Domestic Violence | Immigration | Community Care | Public Law | Other |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Total | 2,100 | 2,400 | 1,600 | 1,200 | 180 | 210 | 30 | 40 | 130 | 50 | 350 |
| Q1 | 170 | 210 | 50 | 110 | <10 | 10 | <10 | <10 | <10 | <10 | <10 |
| Q2 | 460 | 630 | 160 | 350 | 70 | 70 | <10 | <10 | 40 | <10 | 10 |
| Q3 | 1,500 | 1,600 | 1,400 | 720 | 100 | 130 | 20 | 30 | 80 | 40 | 340 |

Table 7: Percentage of issues advised on by local and regional grantees across different areas of law, per delivery quarter

| | Family | Employment | Housing | Welfare Benefits | Debt | Discrimination | Domestic Violence | Immigration | Community Care | Public Law | Other |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| Total | 25% | 29% | 19% | 14% | 2% | 3% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 4% |
| Q1 | 29% | 36% | 8% | 19% | 1% | 2% | 0% | 0% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| Q2 | 25% | 35% | 9% | 19% | 4% | 4% | 1% | 0% | 2% | 0% | 1% |
| Q3 | 25% | 27% | 24% | 12% | 2% | 2% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 6% |

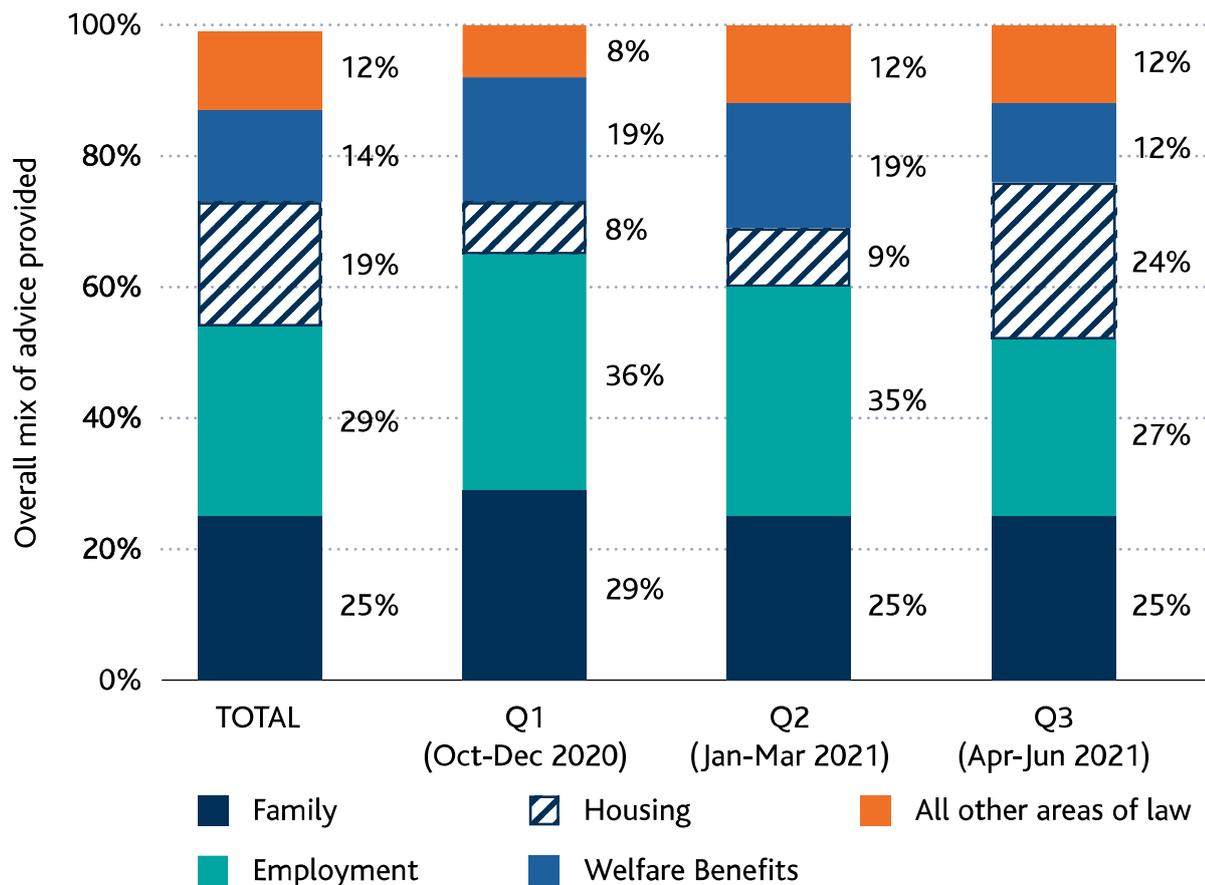
There has been a substantial increase in the amount of family, employment, and housing advice provided in Q3 compared to the previous quarters, as can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Volume of issues advised on by local and regional grantees across different areas of law, per delivery quarter



The steepest increase was in housing advice, which increased by over 8.5 times compared to Q2. This changes the overall mix of advice, to be more evenly spread between family, employment, housing, and other areas of law (including welfare benefits) as demonstrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Overall mix of advice provided by local and regional grantees, total and per delivery quarter



Most advice provided by local and regional LSLIP grantees has been initial generalist advice, which comprises 68% of advice, however there is some variation between the delivery quarters and different areas of law.

As well as flexibility over the areas of law, the LSLIP grant allowed organisations to bid for funding for the type of advice that their local areas required. As previously outlined, to capture the different forms of advice in a consistent way, grantees reported on advice sessions at four stages. Several grantees predicted that they would provide the highest volumes at the initial stages, where it’s possible to provide advice to a greater number of people as it does not involve continued work over an extended period of time, but sought funding to provide advice at all stages.

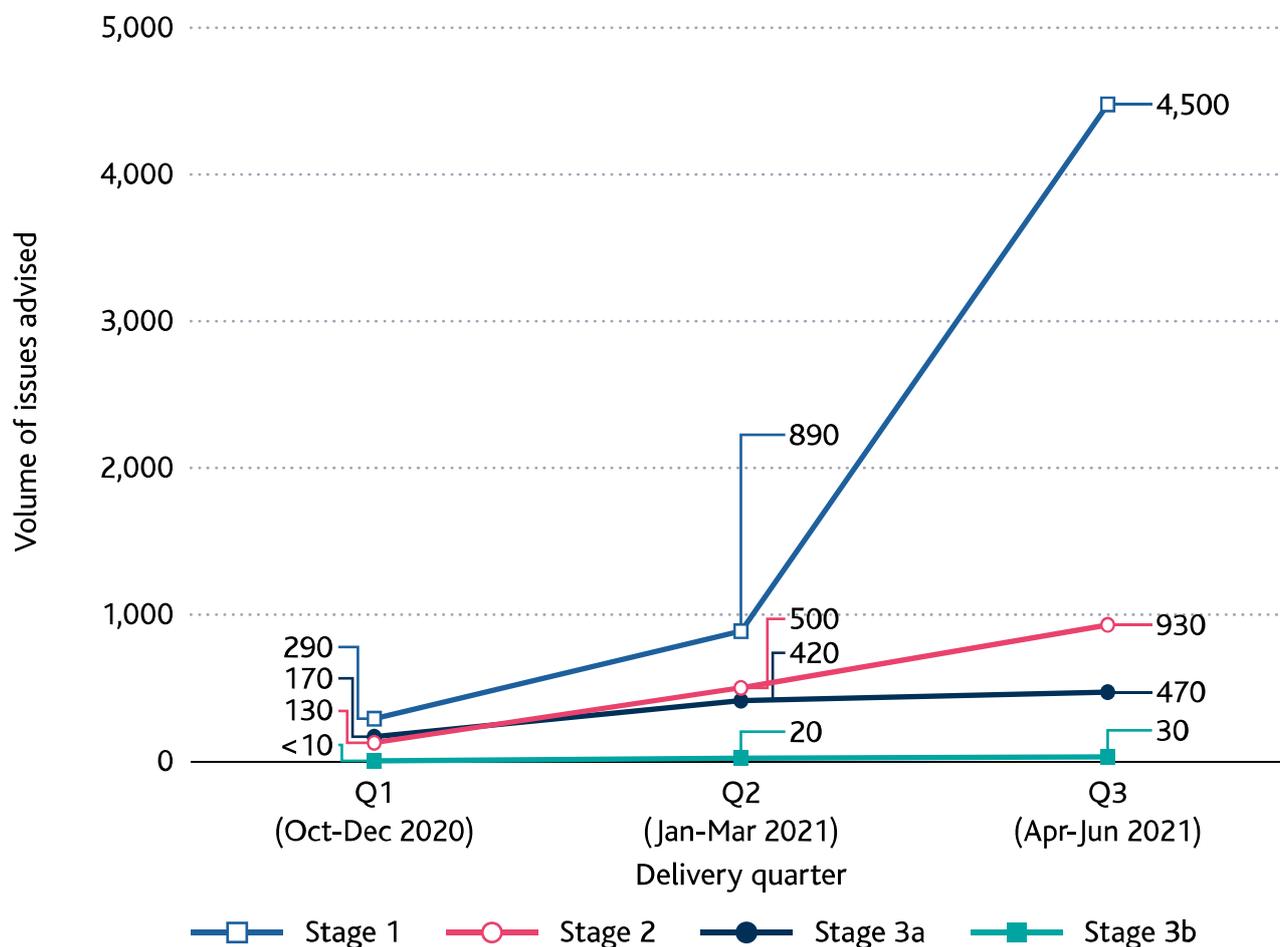
The majority of advice provided by the local and regional grantees has been at the initial generalist advice stage (stage 1), though there are considerable volumes of advice sessions at the casework (stage 2) and pre-court advice (stage 3a) stages, as illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8: Support provided by local and regional grantees at each stage

| Stage | Support provided | Total volume of issues advised | Proportion of all issues |
|-----------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Stage 1 | Initial generalist advice and triage | 5,700 | 68% |
| Stage 2 | Casework | 1,600 | 19% |
| Stage 3a | Pre-court advice, guidance and support | 1,100 | 13% |
| Stage 3b | Legal advice and representation at court | 60 | <1% |

The large increase in the number of issues advised on over the most recent quarter is partly due to a significant increase of advice at stage one, as demonstrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Volume of issues advised at each stage by local and regional grantees, per delivery quarter

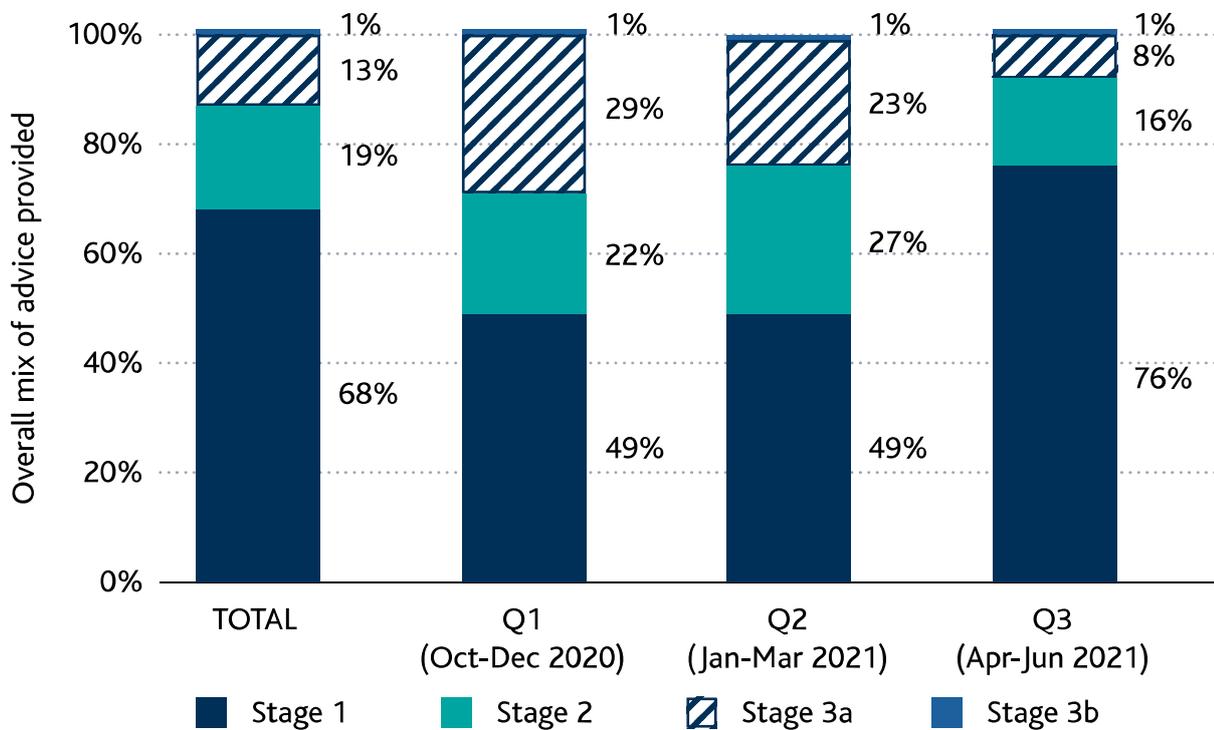


Several grantees have reported that they have been able to increase advice at stage one as their LSLIP funded specialist caseworkers have provided training for volunteers and staff, increasing the volumes, quality and effectiveness of initial advice and triage activity.

“[The grant has] introduced new measures including upskilling volunteers and therefore we now have a cohort of volunteers available that the Law Centre can service via the community navigator role....the training of volunteers enabled the service to triage more effectively, but also to look at sources of assistance available.” (Greater Manchester and Lancashire)

This increase in initial generalist advice changes the overall mix of advice, compared to advice provided in the first two quarters, as demonstrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Overall mix of advice provided by local and regional grantees, total and per delivery quarter

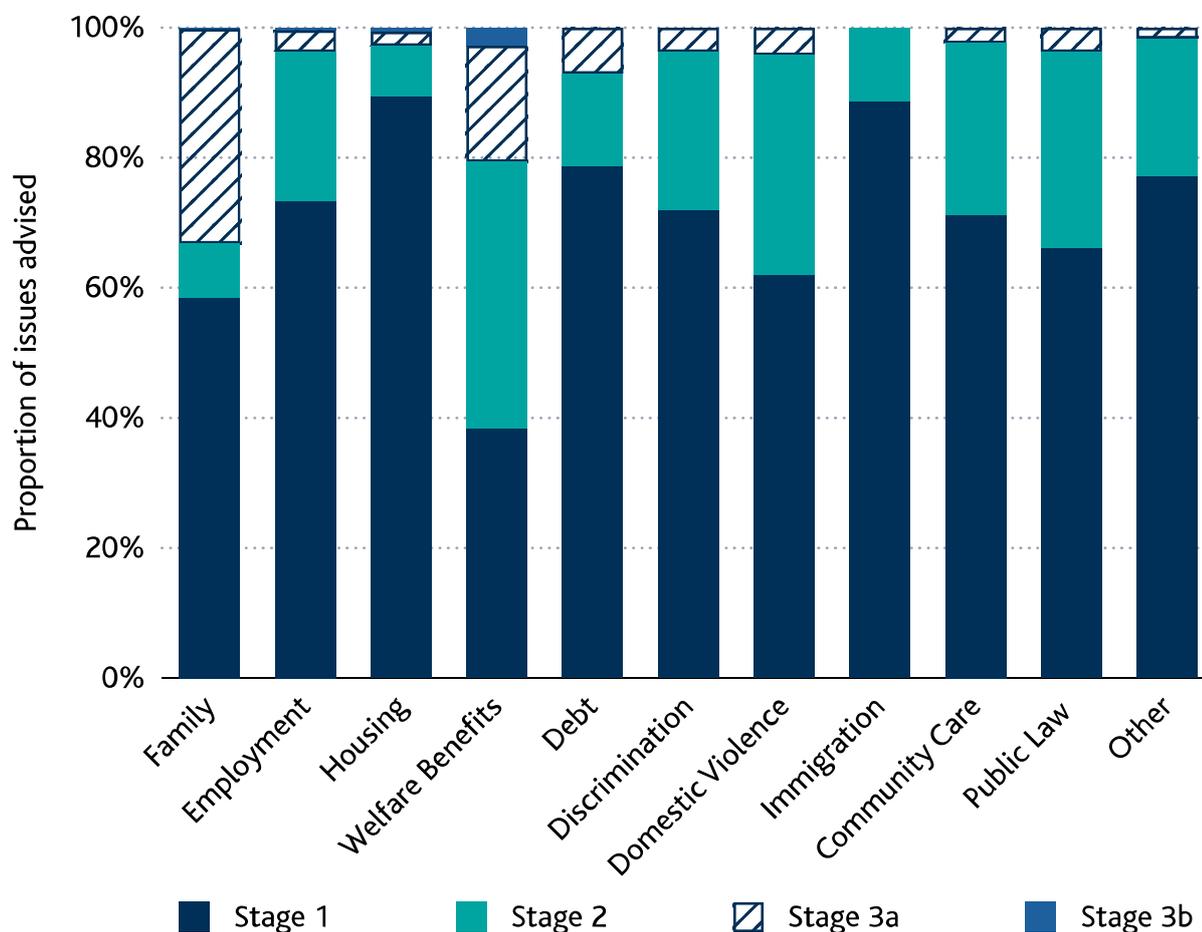


There is also some variation in the types of advice provided between the areas of law, with a greater proportion of initial early advice provided on some issues than others. Table 9 provides a breakdown of the volumes of advice at each stage, per area of law, but the variation is best depicted visually within Figure 8.

Table 9: Volume of issued advised by local and regional grantees at each stage, per area of law

| | Family | Employment | Housing | Welfare Benefits | Debt | Discrimination | Domestic Violence | Immigration | Community Care | Public Law | Other |
|-----------------|--------|------------|---------|------------------|------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-------|
| Stage 1 | 1,200 | 1,800 | 1,500 | 450 | 140 | 150 | 20 | 30 | 90 | 40 | 270 |
| Stage 2 | 180 | 560 | 130 | 490 | 30 | 50 | 10 | <10 | 30 | 20 | 80 |
| Stage 3a | 700 | 80 | 40 | 210 | 10 | <10 | <10 | - | <10 | <10 | <10 |
| Stage 3b | <10 | 10 | 10 | 30 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

Figure 8: Proportion of issues advised by local and regional grantees at each stage, per area of law



This variation is partly reflective of the different nature of problems, the people experiencing them, the action required to resolve them. For example, Welfare Benefits issues have also been provided with much higher volumes of casework (41%), pre-court advice (18%) and representation at court/tribunal (3%) than issues in other areas of law. This is partly because many clients have unsuccessfully made an initial claim against the

welfare benefits decision themselves before presenting to the advice organisation, and now need support with the appeals process. The appeals process involves casework and support with a Tribunal hearing, and therefore require more intensive, later stage support.

A much higher proportion of family issues has been provided with pre-court advice and guidance (33% advised at stage 3a) than issues in other areas of law (around 6% advised at stage 3a), a key influencer being that a high proportion of family law cases need to be resolved in court due to the highly complex nature of family problems that lead individuals to seek an independent decision at court.

The majority of support provided by the national LSLIP grantees have also been in family, employment and housing areas of law, with the exception of LawWorks Free Legal Answers tool, which has had a high proportion of demand from clients with consumer issues.

Support Through Court LSLIP services have provided practical, procedural and emotional support on family issues, specifically divorce and child arrangements. The partnership with the RCJ Advice lawyer has enabled a number of these clients to access specialist family legal advice.

Law for Life utilised LSLIP funding to update several of their Advicenow guides, including guides to support individuals with welfare benefits, housing and family problems¹¹. Traffic to these guides and tools has been substantial, with around 16,000 views of the Section 21 guide (housing), 140,000 views of the PIP tool (welfare benefits), 16,000 views of the DLA tool and over 40,000 views of both the child arrangements and financial order guides.

Law for Life have noted that pageviews for these resources has varied in accordance with changing legal needs as a result of the pandemic. For example, the mandatory reconsideration tools have historically been the most used resources on Advicenow, but these have been engaged with less over the pandemic due to the reduction in benefits appeals taking place.

In keeping with the other funded services, Free Legal Answers have mostly supported clients with family (22%), housing (23%) and employment (11%) problems. In addition, they have also helped a number of users with debt problems (17%) and consumer issues (27%).

¹¹ This includes: The Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance tools, Section 21 guide, how to apply for a child arrangements order without a lawyer guide, how to apply for a financial order without a lawyer guide.

The four advice stages do not align with the national grantee services, so it is not possible to analyse their delivery in this way. However, the national LSLIP services are providing a range of different services at each stage of the problem resolution journey, from information, guidance and digital tools (Law for Life), to specialist advice from a lawyer (RCJ Advice and LawWorks), and emotional, practical and procedural advice at court (Support Through Court).

5.3 Characteristics of LSLIP clients

Key Points

- Grantees have collected data on the nine protected characteristics of LSLIP clients, to gain insight into the individuals supported by the grant.
- This interim report only analyses the age, gender, race and disability of clients, due to the low disclosure rate of the other characteristics at this stage of the grant.
- Many clients do not disclose this information out of concern that it may hinder their access to services, so this sample may be skewed towards certain groups and not be representative of all clients.

In order to gain insight into the cohort of individuals supported through the LSLIP grant, to inform adjustments to services and to prompt further evaluation or inquiry, grantees have been collecting data on the nine protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010) of clients¹². This data also supports the Ministry of Justice in its Public Sector Equalities Duty.

To explore how LSLIP characteristics align or differ from existing evidence on the cohort of people experiencing legal problems, other advice clients and the general population, LSLIP data has been compared to several other publicly available sources of data. This

¹² The nine protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010) are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

includes Citizens Advice Tableau data¹³, 2011 Census data¹⁴ and the MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey (LPRS)¹⁵. These data tables are on p.55-56 of the report.

Local and regional LSLIP partners

A purposive sampling approach has been adopted, whereby grantees only gather this personal data where it organically arises during the advice appointment or where it is deemed appropriate to ask, in order to maintain the trust and rapport between clients and advisers. This means that complete data has not been collected for all nine characteristics and only a sample is available. This sample varies across the characteristics as some are more sensitive than others. At this interim stage, this report analyses the distribution of age, gender, race and disability amongst LSLIP clients but has not examined the remaining protected characteristics due to the low disclosure rate.

Many clients do not disclose this information out of concern that it may hinder their access to services, so this sample may be skewed towards certain groups and not be representative of all clients. The disclosure rate for each protected characteristic has been stated in order to demonstrate the proportion of clients this data represents.

National LSLIP partners

The national grantees gather data on the protected characteristics of their clients in a range of ways, including Google Analytics and client surveys. These sources of data also represent a sample of users and may be skewed towards certain demographics, so may not be representative of all clients. These services are also often used by other individuals seeking advice or guidance for someone else, so the data may not necessarily represent the person experiencing the problem. For example, 69% of Law for Life's Advicenow resources are people looking for advice for their own legal problem. The remaining 31% are friends, relatives, advisers or individuals acting in another volunteer or professional role.

¹³ Citizens Advice upload data from over 600 offices and 1,800 outreach locations on a monthly basis. The data represents the profile of clients over the last 12 months. To view this available data see: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/citizensadvice/viz/AdviceTrendsSeptember2021/Cover>

¹⁴ The 2011 Census provides a detailed snapshot of the public and its characteristics, including protected characteristics. For further information see: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>

¹⁵ The Legal Problem and Resolution Survey (LPRS) is a general population survey of 10,000 adults conducted in 2014/15, that gathers information on the incidence of legal problems, who experiences them and the action taken to resolve them. It is important to note that the LPRS was conducted pre-pandemic, so may not be wholly representative of people currently experiencing legal issues in 2020 and 2021. A report on the findings from the LPRS can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596490/legal-problem-resolution-survey-2014-to-2015-findings.pdf

5.3.1 Age

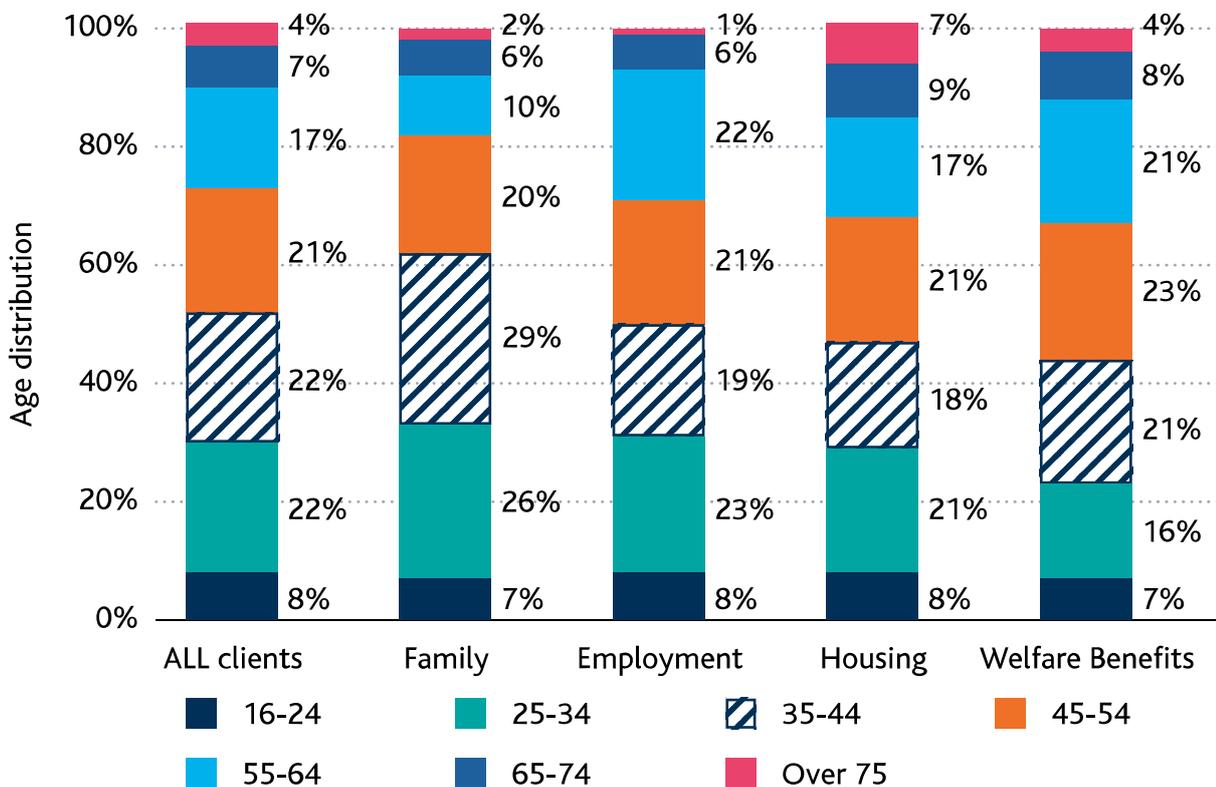
Key Points

- 79% of the local and regional LSLIP clients have disclosed their age. Removing those that prefer not to say, around two thirds (65%) of all clients are between 25 and 55.
- Further data is required before valid and reliable conclusions can be made, however Google Analytics data suggests that a younger cohort of users appear to be using Advicenow.

79% of the local and regional LSLIP clients have disclosed their age. Removing those that prefer not to say, around two thirds (65%) of all clients are between 25 and 55.

A detailed breakdown of the age of LSLIP clients, removing those who prefer not to say, is available in Table 10. Figure 9 depicts the age distribution of all LSLIP clients and those with family, employment, housing and welfare benefits issues. The other areas of law have not been included at this stage, due to low volumes. There is a little variation amongst the areas of law, with a younger cohort of clients with family problems, than other areas of law.

Figure 9: Age distribution of all local and regional LSLIP grantees and those with family, employment, housing and welfare benefits issues, removing those that prefer not to say



This age distribution of local and regional LSLIP clients broadly mirrors the age profile of Citizens Advice users, suggesting that LSLIP grant activities are reaching a similar aged cohort as other advice services. Local and regional grantees do not appear to be reaching large volumes of people over 65, despite the LPRS indicating that 43% of people reporting a problem were over 65. However, as the Citizens Advice data suggests that only 14% of their clients are over 65, it may be that seeking help from an advice agency is not the resolution strategy that this older cohort pursues. It is also important to note that those that did not disclose their age may have been in this age bracket.

Google Analytics data suggests that a younger cohort of users appear to be using Advicenow, with almost half of users (45%) under 35.

This may reflect how younger cohorts are often more digitally capable and will seek online resources as their first action. However, Law for Life's Google Analytics data only represents around 25% of Advicenow users, so may not be a true portrayal of all users and may skew towards certain groups. In support of this, a self-selecting survey of 125 users found the age of users to be older than this suggests, although the sample is very small relative to the volume of all Advicenow users.

The volume of LawWorks and STC/RCJA clients disclosing their age is very low. The data has been included in Table 10 in the interest of transparency, but further data is required before valid and reliable conclusions can be made.

5.3.2 Sex

Key Points

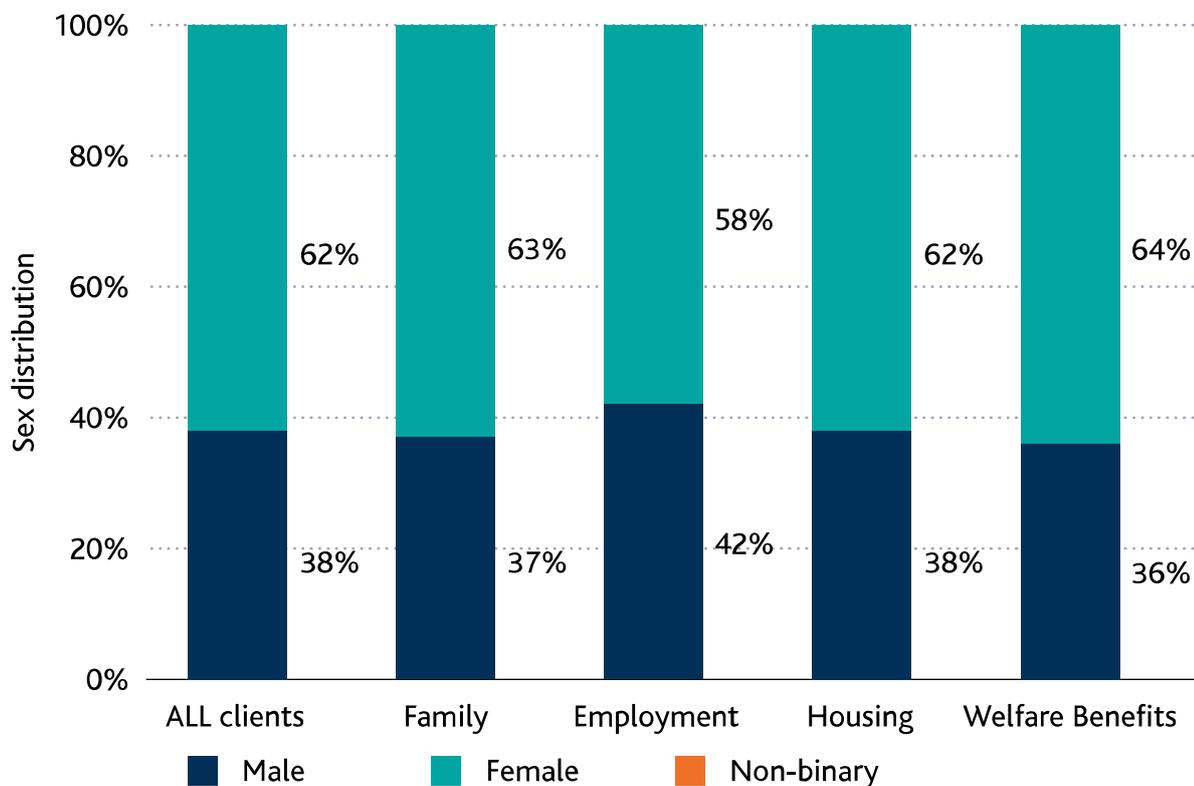
- 80% of the local and regional LSLIP clients have disclosed their sex. Removing those that prefer not to say, around two thirds of clients are female (62%).
- Further data is required before valid and reliable conclusions can be made, however available data suggests that the majority of national grantee clients are also female.

80% of the local and regional LSLIP clients have disclosed their sex. Removing those that prefer not to say, around two thirds of clients are female (62%).

A detailed breakdown of the sex of LSLIP clients, removing those that prefer not to say, is available in Table 11. Figure 10 depicts the sex distribution of all LSLIP clients and those with family, employment, housing and welfare benefits issues. The other areas of law have

not been included at this stage, due to low volumes. There is a little variation between the areas of law, but female clients make up more than half of all local and regional clients in every problem area (at least 58%).

Figure 10: Sex distribution of all local and regional LSLIP grantees and those with family, employment, housing and welfare benefits issues, removing those that prefer not to say



The proportion of female and male local and regional LSLIP clients broadly mirrors the age profile of Citizens Advice users, suggesting that LSLIP services are reaching a similar aged cohort as other advice services. This is also in keeping with LPRS data, which suggests that women experience more legal problems than men. The variation between areas of law is explored in more detail on page 38.

A large proportion of national LSLIP clients have not disclosed their sex, but the available data suggests that the majority of Law for Life and STC/RCJA clients are also female. Free Legal Answers has more male users than female, though the sample is very small at this stage and more data is required to validate this finding.

Law for Life’s Google Analytics data on the sex of Advicenow users represents around 34% of all visitors to the site, so may not be a true portrayal of all users. The self-selecting survey of 125 users on Advicenow also found that most users were female, although the sample is very small relative to the volume of Advicenow users.

Available data from Support Through Court and RCJ Advice suggests that the majority of their clients are also female. However, the volume of clients disclosing their sex is also low, representing around 25% of all clients supported by the RCJA lawyer and Support Through Court. This means that the sex distribution in Table 11 may not be a true depiction of the users of these services.

Data reported by Free Legal Answers suggest that their service has slightly more male users, however, the sample is very small at this stage and more data is required before the conclusion can be made that Free Legal Answers is reaching a different cohort to other advice services. These trends will be monitored as more data becomes available.

5.3.3 Race

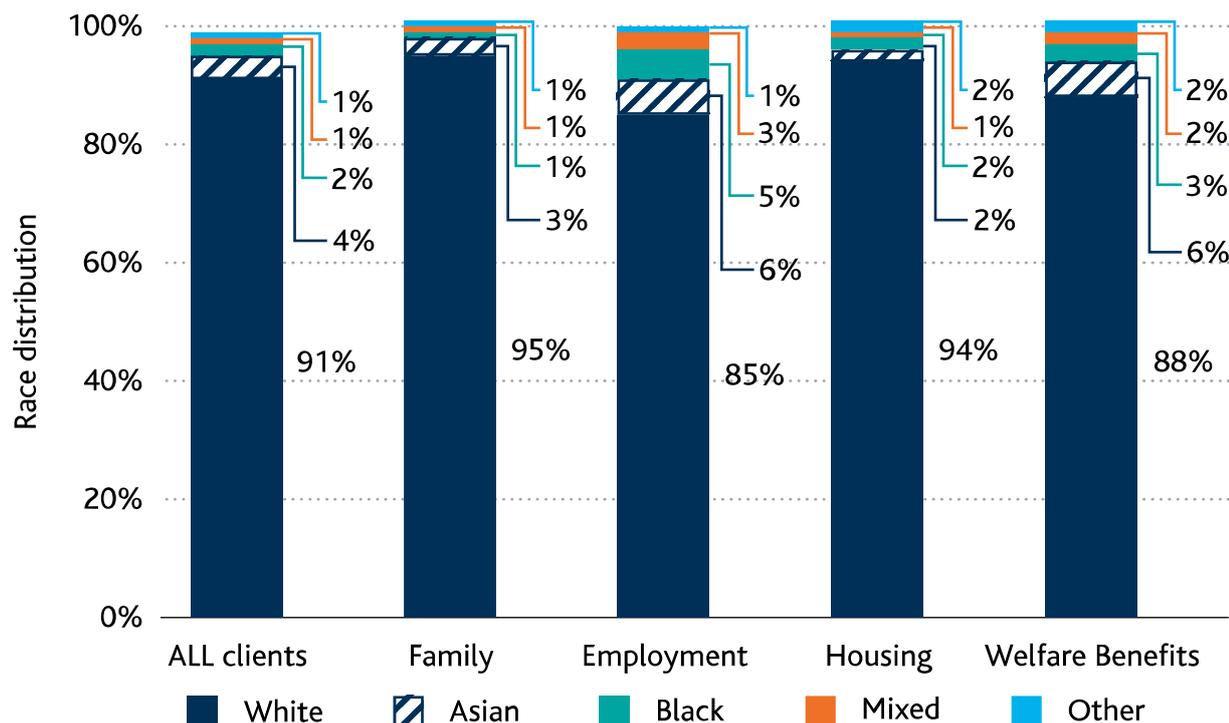
Key Points

- 61% of the local and regional LSLIP clients have disclosed their race. Removing those that prefer not to say, the majority of clients are white (91%).
- There appears to be greater diversity amongst the clients of the national grantees, but a large proportion of clients from all grantees did not disclose this data, so more data is required to validate these findings.

61% of the local and regional LSLIP clients have disclosed their race. Removing those that prefer not to say, the majority of clients are white (91%).

A detailed breakdown of the race of LSLIP clients is available in Table 12. The grantees collect this data with more granularity than is presented in this report, but to protect anonymity, increase the readability of the information and allow comparisons with other data sources, several categories have been combined. Figure 11 illustrates the race distribution of all LSLIP clients and those with family, employment, housing and welfare benefits issues. The other areas of law have not been included at this stage, due to low volumes.

Figure 11: Race distribution of all local and regional LSLIP grantees and those with family, employment, housing and welfare benefits issues, removing those that prefer not to say



When removing those that prefer not to say, 91% of local and regional LSLIP grantee clients are white. This differs from the census data, however the areas in which the local and regional grantees operate will have different demographic profiles, and therefore the client characteristics may represent their local areas, but not the overall census data. This is particularly pertinent as LSLIP is not funding services in London (the most ethnically diverse part of the UK) and is funding services in Wales (the least ethnically diverse part of the UK).

The LSLIP data also differs from the Citizens Advice data, however more than 40% of clients did not disclose this information. This means that there may be greater diversity amongst clients than this figure implies, particularly as there is the view that some clients are afraid of disclosing this information for fear of the impact of this on the service they may receive. This trend will be monitored throughout the remaining half of the LSLIP grant.

The available data suggests that the majority of STC/RCJA and Law Works clients are white (69% and 62%), but that there's a greater diversity amongst the clients of these LSLIP grantees. However, similarly to the local and regional data, a large proportion of clients have not disclosed their race. The low disclosure rate amongst local and regional clients also means that there may be greater diversity amongst these clients than the data suggests.

5.3.4 Disability

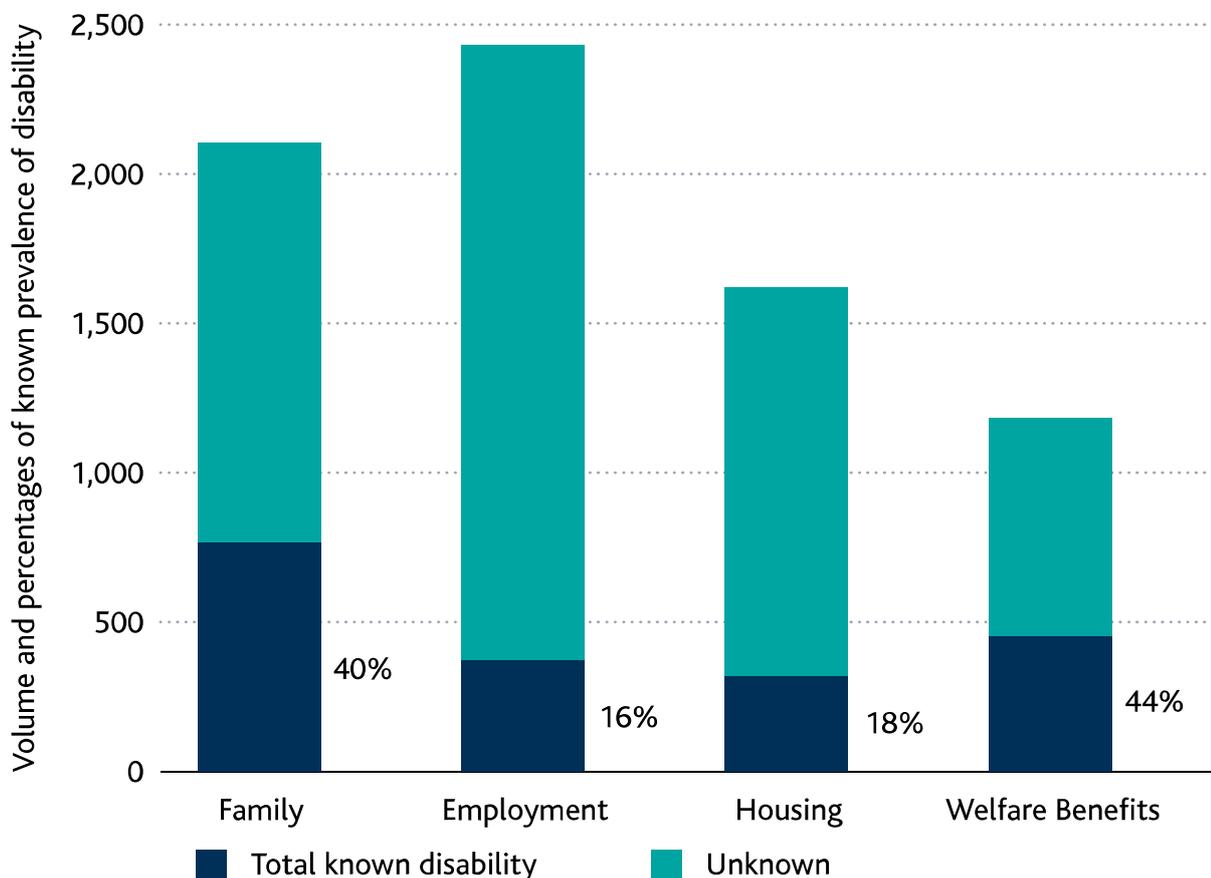
Key Points

- At least 26% of local and regional LSLIP clients have a physical, sensory, cognitive or mental health disability, and a high proportion of STC/RCJA and Law for Life users also have a disability.
- There is evidence to suggest that this is an underestimation and that a higher volume of clients have poor physical and mental health and have other indicators of vulnerability.

At least 26% of local and regional LSLIP clients have a physical, sensory, cognitive or mental health disability.

A detailed breakdown of the prevalence of disability within LSLIP clients is available in Table 13. Figure 12 illustrates the known prevalence of disability in clients with family, employment, housing and welfare benefits issues. The other areas of law have not been included at this stage, due to the low volume of cases.

Figure 12: Volume and percentages of known prevalence of disability in local and regional clients with family, employment, housing and welfare benefits issues



The local and regional LSLIP data should be interpreted as an indication of the minimum prevalence of disability, as it is not possible to identify how many clients preferred not to disclose this information from the way the data is collected and reported. There is also the possibility that double counting or under counting in the initial periods has occurred for clients with more than one type of disability. However, the client case studies, interviews with grantees and the existing evidence on the incidence of legal problems suggests that 26% is likely an underestimation of the prevalence of disability within LSLIP clients.

“Clients may not disclose a disability especially a mental health condition until further on in the process, therefore those using one-off advice may not include this information unless they think it directly relevant to their case.” (East and West Midlands)

The LPRS found that 38% of people experiencing problems have a long-standing illness or disability, which is very similar to the proportion of Citizens Advice clients with a disability or longstanding health issue. Quantitative data on the long-term health condition of LSLIP clients has not been collected, but the interview findings and case studies suggest that many LSLIP clients struggle with a variety of health issues, including poor mental health including anxiety and depression, general poor health, long-term physical health conditions and learning disabilities.

“Mental health issues of clients are difficult to pinpoint as many are not yet diagnosed but still have other complex problems...there is a distinction between mental health issues such as mental health disorders as opposed to anxiety and depression and there are a large number of clients with severe mental health problems.” (North East)

The available data suggests that a high proportion of STC/RCJA and Law for Life users also have a disability.

The sample of users providing this information is small, and in a similar manner to the local and regional data, it is not possible to identify how many clients would prefer not to say. However, the client case studies submitted by the national grantees suggest that a large number of their users have a disability, a long-term health condition or struggle with their mental health. Grantees also noted that the pandemic has influenced the type of issues

experienced and therefore the characteristics of clients, with fewer disabled people using their services as a result of paused welfare benefit reviews.

“Before the pandemic Advicenow user surveys consistently demonstrated a high proportion of disabled users. Our surveys in Q4 show a lower proportion and we believe this is because fewer disabled people are visiting Advicenow to use our PIP and DLA appeal resources, as the DWP has paused reviews.” (Law for Life)

5.3.5 Vulnerability

Key Points

- Grantees regularly engaged with client groups with a complex cluster of issues that put them at an increased level of risk and vulnerability.
- These vulnerable clients require prolonged periods of support which can be difficult to effectively capture and address whilst delivering advice and support remotely.

Grantees have reported in their monitoring reports and interviews that they are regularly engaging with vulnerable client groups whose circumstances (e.g. socio-economic factors) put them at an increased level of risk and vulnerability. This includes age-related poor health or general poor health, mental ill-health, domestic abuse, low income, digital exclusion, English as a second language and rural isolation. These clients routinely present with a complex cluster of issues that worsens their vulnerable status and require prolonged periods of support as these individuals are commonly not able to manage the process of resolving their issue on their own.

“It is apparent that vulnerable clients, for example those with mental health issues, can’t undertake this process alone and require support to be represented otherwise their personal and legal problem will only escalate.” (Mid and North Yorkshire)

The case study within Figure 13 illustrates the multiple vulnerabilities of some LSLIP clients and how challenging it can be for these people to navigate complex legal issues.

Figure 13: Local LSLIP partner case study

| Stream 1 case study | |
|---|--|
| Vulnerable client with mental health and domestic abuse issues secures urgent accommodation | |
| <p>Problem</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A client suffering from arthritis, anxiety and panic attacks contacted the advice service shortly after leaving her abusive partner. Living in temporary accommodation and Universal Credit being her only source of income, she requested advice having recently made a homeless application with the Local Authority (LA). ➤ Having been offered a place in a refuge, the client sourced temporary private accommodation but this was soon to become unavailable and she would be left homeless. Urgent support was required as the LA had informed the client that she was not in priority need for emergency accommodation. |
| <p>Action</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A caseworker established the client's housing status and rights to remain in her current accommodation. Advice was provided on how to request emergency accommodation and her rights to request a review. The client was advised to gather evidence that would support a case for being classed as vulnerable due to their mental illness and having to vacate accommodation due to domestic abuse. ➤ Despite an internal review, the client was turned down for interim accommodation by the LA. |
| <p>Outcome</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The caseworker supported the client to instruct a legal aid solicitor to make an application for a judicial review which led to interim accommodation being provided. The client's priority for housing was also upgraded to 'gold band' and she was able to secure a 12-month starter tenancy with a housing association. ➤ Support continued to be provided to ensure the client was claiming the necessary entitlement to welfare benefits and signposted to other charitable sources to help furnish the accommodation. |

Grantees spoke of how it is more challenging to effectively capture and address the needs of vulnerable groups whilst delivering advice and support remotely. Services have limited ability to identify other, and possibly multiple, problems of clients via remote means as it is not possible to read body language and other non-verbal cues. However, client feedback received has reassured services that the current level of delivery and the one-to-one support provided to vulnerable clients has been working well to guide them through the next steps of their legal issue and reach a positive outcome.

“Clients have been appreciative of the service on offer as we have been dealing with difficult situations and vulnerable clients and they have been glad of the support provided by the project. The “hand-holding” has supported clients to build their confidence for them to take the necessary next steps.”

(North and Mid Wales)

Protected characteristic data tables

Table 10: Age distribution of LSLIP clients, removing those that prefer not to say, compared with Citizens Advice data, the MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey and 2011 Census data

| | National grantees | | | | | | Local and regional grantees | | Citizens Advice (September 2021) | MoJ LPRS (2017) | Census (2011) |
|----------------|--------------------------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | Free Legal Answers (Law Works) | | STC and RCJA | | Advicenow (Law for Life) | | | | | | |
| | Volume | % | Volume | % | Volume | % | Volume | % | | | |
| 16-24 | <10 | 7% | <10 | 3% | 42,000 | 17% | 520 | 8% | 7% | 4% | 15% |
| 25-34 | <10 | 18% | 20 | 29% | 69,000 | 28% | 1,400 | 22% | 20% | 24% | 17% |
| 35-44 | <10 | 25% | 30 | 44% | 47,000 | 19% | 1,400 | 22% | 20% | | 17% |
| 45-54 | <10 | 4% | 10 | 15% | 41,000 | 16% | 1,400 | 21% | 19% | 28% | 17% |
| 55-64 | <10 | 21% | <10 | 7% | 28,000 | 11% | 1,100 | 17% | 21% | | 14% |
| 65-74 | <10 | 14% | <10 | 1% | 22,000 | 9% | 480 | 7% | 14% | 40% | 20% |
| Over 75 | <10 | 11% | <10 | 1% | | | 230 | 4% | | 3% | |

Table 11: Sex distribution of LSLIP clients, removing those that prefer not to say, compared with Citizens Advice data, the MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey and 2011 Census data

| | National grantees | | | | | | Local and regional grantees | | Citizens Advice (September 2021) | MoJ LPRS (2017) | Census (2011) |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | Free Legal Answers (Law Works) | | STC and RCJA | | Advicenow (Law for Life) | | | | | | |
| | Volume | % | Volume | % | Volume | % | Volume | % | | | |
| Female | 20 | 44% | 430 | 59% | 150,000 | 55% | 2,600 | 62% | 58% | 55% | 51% |
| Male | 20 | 56% | 300 | 41% | 120,000 | 45% | 4,100 | 38% | 42% | 45% | 49% |
| Non-binary | - | - | - | - | - | - | <10 | <1% | - | - | - |

Table 12: Race distribution of LSLIP clients, removing those that prefer not to say, compared with Citizens Advice data, the MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey and 2011 Census data

| | National grantees | | | | | | Local and regional grantees | | Citizens Advice (September 2021) | MoJ LPRS (2017) | Census (2011) |
|--------------|--------------------------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | Free Legal Answers (Law Works) | | STC and RCJA | | Advicenow (Law for Life) | | | | | | |
| | Volume | % | Volume | % | Volume | % | Volume | % | | | |
| White | 20 | 62% | 460 | 69% | Not available | | 4,600 | 91% | 81% | 91% | 86% |
| Asian | <10 | 13% | 80 | 12% | | | 200 | 4% | 7% | 3% | 8% |
| Black | <10 | 13% | 90 | 13% | | | 120 | 2% | 7% | 3% | 3% |
| Mixed | <10 | 8% | <10 | 1% | | | 80 | 1% | 3% | 1% | 2% |
| Other | <10 | 5% | 30 | 4% | | | 70 | 1% | 3% | 1% | 1% |

Table 13: Prevalence of disability in LSLIP clients, removing those that prefer not to say, compared with Citizens Advice data, the MoJ Legal Problem and Resolution Survey and 2011 Census data

| | National grantees | | | | | | Local and regional grantees | | Citizens Advice (September 2021) | MoJ LPRS (2017) | Census (2011) | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------|-----|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-----------------|---|--|-----|
| | Free Legal Answers (Law Works) | | STC and RCJA | | Advicenow (Law for Life) | | | | | | | | |
| | Volume | % | Volume | % | Volume | % | Volume | % | | | | | |
| Physical | Not available | | 140 | 16% | 40 | | 37% | | 760 | 10% | Disability: 6% Long term health condition: 33% | Long-standing illness or disability: 38% | 18% |
| Sensory | | | - | - | | | | | 310 | 4% | | | |
| Cognitive | | | - | - | | | | | 100 | 1% | | | |
| Mental Health | | | 60 | 7% | | | | | 880 | 11% | | | |

5.3.6 Local and regional family, employment, housing and welfare benefits clients

Key Points

- A higher proportion of local and regional family, housing and welfare benefits clients disclose this information than employment clients possibly due to the nature of the engagement with the client.
- At this interim stage, a higher proportion of family clients appear to be between 25 and 54 than the other three areas, there appears to be greater diversity amongst employment and welfare benefits advice clients, and a higher proportion of family and welfare benefits clients appear to have a disability.

This section explores the characteristics of local and regional clients with family, employment, housing and welfare benefits issues, as these areas of law have the highest volume of LSLIP clients.

A higher proportion of family, housing and welfare benefits clients disclose this information than employment clients, as can be seen in Table 14. This may be due to the nature of the engagement with the client (for example, the discussion of family and welfare benefits issues involves building rapport and the disclosure of more personal information) or the difficulty for some grantees to gather this information within their data collection processes and case management systems. This means that greater caution is required when interpreting the data related to clients with employment issues, as a larger proportion of these clients have unknown protected characteristics.

Table 14: Sex, age and race disclosure rates - all local and regional LSLIP clients, compared to clients with family, employment, housing and welfare benefits issues

| | All clients | Family | Employment | Housing | Welfare Benefits |
|-------------|-------------|--------|------------|---------|------------------|
| Sex | 80% | 88% | 68% | 96% | 77% |
| Age | 79% | 87% | 68% | 92% | 81% |
| Race | 61% | 69% | 53% | 64% | 65% |

As can be seen in Table 15, there is some variation in the protected characteristics of local and regional clients with family, employment, housing and welfare benefits problems.

Table 15: Protected characteristics of all local and regional LSLIP clients, compared to clients with family, employment, housing and welfare benefits issues

| | All clients | Family | Employment | Housing | Welfare Benefits |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------|------------|---------|------------------|
| Female | 62% | 63% | 58% | 62% | 64% |
| Between 25 and 54 | 65% | 75% | 62% | 59% | 60% |
| White | 91% | 95% | 85% | 94% | 88% |
| Minimum disability prevalence | 26% | 40% | 16% | 18% | 43% |

A higher proportion of family clients appear to be between 25 and 54 than in other areas of law, which is consistent with the age bracket typically associated with the need for legal resolution of child residence and maintenance, and is consistent with Citizens Advice data, which suggests that 73% of family clients are within this age bracket.

There is greater race diversity reported for clients with employment and welfare benefits issues than other areas of law. In the area of employment, this may be due to problems associated with discrimination. However, race is the least disclosed protected characteristic and so may not be a true representation of all clients in these areas of law.

Similarly, a higher proportion of family and welfare benefits clients appear to have a disability, however the disability estimates across all areas of law are likely an underestimation and require further investigation. Disclosure of disability in welfare benefits is expected to be higher, due to Disability Allowance claims, however the disparity across areas of law may also reflect greater opportunity to build rapport and disclose sensitive information during the discussion of these issues.

All grantees will be encouraged to continue capturing protected characteristic data where it is proportionate to do so, so that these trends can be monitored.

6. Outcomes achieved for LSLIP clients

Key Points

- To measure the benefits the advice has brought for litigants in person, grantees have been collecting data related to several outcomes. Early data indicates that the LSLIP programme has increased access to advice, brought improvements to client legal capability and led to earlier problem resolution.
- These findings are based on interim data with varying sample sizes, so more data is required to support these conclusions.

To measure the benefits the advice has brought for litigants in person, grantees have been collecting data measuring progress against several key outcomes. These outcomes relate to increased access to advice, improvements to client legal capability, problem resolution and overall satisfaction with services and outcomes.

As previously mentioned, collating data from several organisations presents potential measurement issues, as each organisation may interpret the data requirements slightly differently. The Access to Justice Foundation and Ministry of Justice have worked with grantees to attempt to control for any variation as much as possible, but these measurement issues may be partly responsible for any differences in outcomes. At this stage of the grant, some of the sample sizes are fairly small, particularly when filtering by stage or type of problem. These factors mean that the data and evidence require careful interpretation and more data and evidence is required to validate the findings.

It was not proportionate or feasible to undertake an experimental or quasi-experimental approach or collect data on a comparison group in order to establish causation, due to the complexity associated with these methodologies. The LSLIP programme is grant funding a number of different services, provided by over 40 organisations, so this would have required disproportionate resource and time from the frontline providers, particularly during Covid-19 where prioritising delivery became particularly important.

All grantees have gone to significant efforts to gather data and evidence throughout the pandemic and have submitted several case studies which have been integrated

throughout this section of the report, in addition to the quantitative data and observations within the monitoring reports.

Local and regional LSLIP partners

There is some variation in the outcomes the local and regional grantees have measured, as not all grantees are delivering services in each area of law or at each stage, and/or do not necessarily measure each outcome. Grantees also have different approaches to data collection and are balancing these requirements with service delivery, so it is not expected that grantees measure each outcome for every client. Each data table indicates the sample size and the number of grantees gathering this information to contextualise the findings.

Exploring the outcomes associated with specific areas of law and stages of advice means some of the samples become quite small, which impacts on the reliability and validity of the findings. As such, at this stage of the grant, there is only enough data to focus specifically on the outcomes from employment and family advice (which account for 54% of all LSLIP advice), as well as the outcomes in aggregate for all areas of law.

National LSLIP partners

Law for Life have provided data on several outcomes, including improved access to advice, improvements to legal capability and improved health and wellbeing. Support Through Court and LawWorks have not been able to capture quantitative outcome data from their LSLIP projects thus far, as their data collection systems are not set up to enable this. However, LawWorks have recently integrated a client survey into the Free Legal Answers platform, which will collect data and evidence on the impact of the advice on clients, which should provide more data for the final evaluation. Support Through Court report that generally across all their services, 99% felt more confident and more prepared, 97% felt they received a better hearing and 74% felt less anxious¹⁶.

¹⁶ For further information see: <https://www.supportthroughcourt.org/get-help/how-we-help/>

6.1 Increased access to advice

Key Points

- A core aim of LSLIP is to enhance and increase the accessibility of advice, by funding a range of advice at different stages of the problem resolution journey and increasing referrals between organisations with different resources and specialisms.
- Local and regional grantees report that 96% of clients presenting to them with in-scope LSLIP issues have been able to find appropriate assistance locally or nationally.
- The national LSLIP partners are also helping clients to access advice. 30% of Affordable Advice users report that they received family law advice which they would not have got without the service, and 40% report that they don't know if they would have.

A core aim of LSLIP is to enhance and increase the accessibility of advice, by funding a range of advice at different stages of the problem resolution journey and increasing referrals between organisations with different resources and specialisms. What would have happened in the absence of the LSLIP services cannot be accurately determined, but the local, regional and national services have noted that their client volumes have increased since LSLIP funding began.

Local and regional LSLIP organisations report that 96% of clients presenting to them with in-scope LSLIP issues have been able to find appropriate assistance locally or nationally.

This is based on a sample of 5,200 clients, which is around 62% of all local and regional LSLIP clients. The achievement of this outcome is slightly higher for some areas of law than others, with 99% of family clients and 93% of employment clients finding appropriate assistance (based on a sample of 1,400 family clients and 1,700 employment clients). This outcome may be realised less often for employment issues due to the delay to Employment Tribunal hearings, which means that cases are being listed outside of the LSLIP grant period (e.g. post-2022) and so advice cannot be guaranteed.

The case studies provided by grantees suggest that they are providing advice and support to clients who otherwise may not have received support, as they do not have the means to pay for private services, as illustrated in the case study in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Local LSLIP partner case study

| Stream 1 case study | |
|--|---|
| Prompt advice and support at court enabled mother to address a child arrangement issue | |
| Problem  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A mother and her 12-year old child travelled to another part of the country for an agreed three week contact with the child’s father. ➤ A day before they were due to return home and with the first day of school term approaching, the father informed the mother that the child did not want to come home and requested for the mother’s agreement to enrol them at a school in his local area. |
| Action  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contacting the local service, the client was advised by a solicitor to make an urgent application for the child’s return and assistance was provided via telephone to complete the relevant court forms. ➤ At the first hearing, the court ordered the child to be returned home immediately and asked for a Section 7 report recommending that it would be in the best interests of the child to remain at the mother’s home. ➤ Without the means for further representation, the LSLIP partner provided a McKenzie Friend to support the client at the final hearing. |
| Outcome  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An order was made by the court that the child must continue to live with the mother and spend time with father in school holidays. ➤ The client was extremely grateful for the service provided: “...you guys really went above and beyond to help me when I didn’t know where to turn. Thank you from the bottom of my heart”. |

The partnerships in Mid and North Yorkshire and East and West Midlands specifically mentioned that clients were able to receive prompt support across a range of areas of law, as a result of having several providers among each partnership with different specialisms. This allowed the services to look at “break points” with clients and avert crises from occurring such as homelessness, poverty or insolvency.

“The organisational mentality was to prioritise those in greater need, but the LSLIP model allowed for problems to be tackled at an early stage to prevent backing up of cases and having a person-centred model.” (Mid and North Yorkshire)

This was echoed by Greater Manchester and Lancashire who noted that they were in a much better position to provide help to clients with multiple and complex issues.

“We are in a much better position to help clients with multiple and complex cluster of issues, identifying other issues and pathways that were not initially presented by a client. For example, around 50% of employment cases have another issue and the service wasn’t able to identify these previously, but we are now able to ask key questions to see these links and LSLIP has enabled key learning and developing these links to address this.” (Greater Manchester and Lancashire)

In order to achieve this close co-ordination between services, several grantees including North and Mid Wales, Dorset and South Somerset, and Devon and Cornwall revised their initial problem diagnosis and triage and referral processes. This enabled clients to be referred with increased efficiency and provided with the appropriate advice that could guide them through the required action. This system also meant that caseworkers could better understand client issues, tailor their advice and address particular needs earlier on, to take appropriate swift action.

“Sometimes we’re seeing accelerated orders which means that we see people two weeks before crisis. It shows how needed this project is, how complex issues they are, how complicated they can be for people, and we can see a difference being made.” (Dorset and South Somerset)

Some partnerships said that the new or adapted ways of working implemented in response to the pandemic enabled them to provide support at an earlier stage. For example, Suffolk and Norfolk mentioned that switching from a paper-based to an online system helped them to effectively monitoring and record a client’s progress and to share relevant information with other services.

The national LSLIP partners are also helping clients to access advice. 30% of Affordable Advice users report that they received family law advice which they would not have got without the service, and 40% report that they don’t know if they would have.

This is based on a sample of 60 users, which is around a quarter of the total users of the service. Users of Affordable Advice told Law for Life that the service “makes accessing advice much more obtainable for those of us on low incomes” and that “being able to seek advice for specific parts of the process is so helpful”.

6.2 Enhanced legal capability

Key Points

- Although citizens should not need to be legal experts, they need to have a basic level of legal capability, to recognise that their problem could have a legal resolution, have the skills, ability and emotional readiness to take action to resolve their problem.
- Local and regional grantees measured three indicators relating to improvements in a client's legal capability, with data indicating: 93% of clients understood their problem and were aware that their issue might have a legal remedy; 81% had a greater understanding of the legally possible outcomes of their problem; and 83% clients receiving pre-court advice/support or representation at their hearing understood what to expect when going to court.
- The national grantee Law for Life found that Advicenow and Affordable Advice improved several aspects of user legal capability, including increased confidence.

People with justiciable problems often do not recognise that they have a legal dimension or route to resolution, and it is far more common to consider these problems a bad luck or part of life, than a legal issue¹⁷. Although citizens should not need to be legal experts, they need to have a basic level of legal capability¹⁸, to recognise that their problem could have a legal resolution, and have the skills, ability and emotional readiness to take action to resolve their problem. Whilst legal capability is not an end in itself, it is crucial for people to pursue legal resolution more effectively and confront any issues in the future.

Local and regional grantees have measured three indicators relating to improvements in their client's legal capability, as a result of the advice, guidance and support given. These indicators measure improvements to clients understanding of their problem, the possible outcome of the problem, and court processes and self-representation, and have been informed by the Public Legal Education Evaluation Framework produced by Law for Life and the Personal Finance Research Centre at the University of Bristol¹⁹.

¹⁷ See findings from the [Legal Problem Resolution Survey](#) in 2017 and the report on [Legal Needs of Individuals in England and Wales](#) in 2019.

¹⁸ See: <https://lawforlife.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/legal-capability-plenet-2009-147-1-147.pdf>

¹⁹ For further information see: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/geography/migrated/documents/pfrc1201.pdf>

Table 16 and 17 on p.70 and p.71 provide a breakdown of how these outcomes have been achieved across the stages and draws comparisons between employment and family clients. The outcomes for other areas of law have not been compared at this stage of the grant as the samples are too small to reliably draw inferences, but this will be explored in the final evaluation report.

Following the support from local and regional LSLIP grantees, 93% of litigants in person understood their problem and were aware that their issue might have a legal remedy.

This is based on a sample of 1,100 clients (around 13% of all local and regional LSLIP clients), measured by 6 of the 8 local and regional grantees.

There is some variation in this outcome between areas of law and stages of advice. The number of clients achieving this outcome increases to 100% at stages 3a and 3b, which is likely reflective of the fact that legal proceedings are underway, so clients have had greater engagement with the formal justice system and therefore recognise the legal nature of the problem. However, the sample size is smaller (less than 100 clients) so more data is required to validate this finding.

The number of clients achieving this outcome reduces to 75% for family issues across all stages of advice, which may be reflective of the tendency for these issues to be perceived as 'part of life' or 'family issues' rather than legal problems. The LPRS found that more people with family legal problems thought of their family issues as 'bad luck or part of life' (63%) than people with civil or administrative problems (55% and 50%). This is reflected in the case study in Figure 15, which outlines how a local LSLIP partner supported a client who was unaware of the legal elements of his problem or how to navigate the family court process. However, the sample of clients for this outcome is smaller here and so more data is required to validate this finding.

Figure 15: Local LSLIP partner case study

| Stream 1 case study | |
|---|--|
| Advice improves a client’s understanding of his problem and how to navigate the legal process | |
| Problem  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A client was not having any contact with his children due to difficulties agreeing child arrangements. He was unaware that his partner already had a child arrangements order, and was frightened by the court papers he received and did not understand what they meant. As English was his second language, he needed help to understand his issue and how to engage with legal processes. |
| Action  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The local LSLIP partner reviewed his documents and used an interpreter to explain what child arrangements orders are and that his ex-partner was agreeing to contact, and that he had a deadline to return an acknowledgement to the family court. The client was signposted to several sources of pro bono specialist family advice to seek further assistance. |
| Outcome  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The client was happy to hear that he was moving in the direction of getting contact with his children and knew his next steps. Having spoken to the client, the adviser was confident that the client would be able to engage in the family court processes and meet his deadlines. |

Following the support from local and regional LSLIP grantees, 81% of litigants in person had a greater understanding of the legally possible outcomes of their problem.

This is based on a sample of 1,000 clients (around 12% of all local and regional LSLIP clients), measured by 7 of the 8 local and regional grantees.

Grantees are helping their clients to understand the range of realistic outcomes, which helps to manage client expectations and prevent weak claims from proceeding to a full hearing, which is critical to avoid issues escalating unnecessarily.

“We can also help to manage expectations of what can be achieved. When a client comes to us, they have sometimes pre-emptively resigned, so we can advise them that the case may not lead to the outcome they seek, so we can advise them how to deal with the issue and seek advice in the future. It’s also about giving people the confidence and understanding of what’s about to happen, if you’ve prepared a case well there’s a stronger chance it will settle out of court.” (East and West Midlands)

This outcome is relatively stable across the areas of law but there is some variation in the achievement of this outcome between stages of advice. The number of clients achieving this outcome increases to 100% at stages 3a and 3b, which may be due to the more intensive support offered at these later stages, which enables greater understanding of what outcome could be achieved. However, the sample size is smaller (less than 100 clients) so more data is required to validate this finding.

Following the support from local and regional LSLIP grantees, 83% of litigants in person receiving pre-court advice/support or representation at their hearing understood what to expect when going to court.

This outcome is only measured for stage 3a and 3b clients to whom advice about court proceedings is given and is therefore based on a smaller sample of clients, so should be interpreted with some caution. This is based on a sample of 300 clients (which is around 27% of all stage 3a and 3b local and regional LSLIP clients), measured by 5 of the 8 local and regional grantees.

A smaller percentage of employment clients achieved this outcome, compared to all clients and those with family issues. There are a couple of potential explanations for why employment clients have less understanding of what to expect at court/Tribunal, however the finding is based on a small sample (less than 50 clients) so more data is required to validate this finding. For clients receiving pre-court advice (stage 3a), it may be due to the delays until hearings which leads to a longer than usual time-lag between the advice and the Tribunal hearing, which may create a lot of uncertainty for clients. It may also be reflective of less public awareness and knowledge of the Tribunal system and the need to engage with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas)²⁰ when experiencing an employment issue. The Access to Justice Foundation have heard anecdotally that an employment issue is often one of the first legal problems that people experience, so this may be the first time these people are engaging with the justice system.

Law for Life also found that Advicenow and Affordable Advice improved several aspects of user legal capability, including increased confidence. A similar proportion of Affordable Advice and local and regional grantee users reported improved legal

²⁰ Acas is an independent public body that provides free and impartial advice to employers, employees and their representatives on employment rights, best practice and resolving workplace conflict. In most cases, an individual must contact Acas, before making a claim to an employment tribunal about a workplace dispute. For more information see: <https://www.acas.org.uk/about-us>

capability, which potentially highlights the added value specialist one to one support can provide, but more evidence is needed to support this conclusion.

A survey embedded within Advicenow found that 45% of Advicenow users report that the website gave them a better understanding of their options; 51% said that it helped them understand what action to take and how to do it; and 48% report that it helped them to feel more confident about what they had to do. This is based on a small sample of users (between 70 and 80 for each outcome) relative to the 100,000s of users that use Advicenow. This means that this may not be representative of all users and may skew towards those that have had a particular positive or negative experience.

Similarly, Law for Life surveyed users of the Affordable Advice service to capture data on how the service has helped them with their issue. 93% reported that the appointment helped them to feel more confident; 84% reported that it helped them to decide what to do; and 85% reported that it helped them to better make their case. This is based on the responses of 60 users, which is around a quarter of all Affordable Advice users. These outcomes are similar to the local and regional grantee legal capability outcome results and highlights the potential value of the additional support that one to one support provides, in addition to online information and guidance, but that conclusion is based on limited data and more evidence is required. The case study within Figure 16 contains further detail on how Affordable Advice helped an individual to understand their family issue and what steps to they needed to take.

Figure 16: Affordable Advice (Law for Life) case study

| Stream 3 case study | |
|---|--|
| Affordable Advice service enabled the client to improve their legal understanding and confidence | |
| Problem  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A client used the Advicenow guide on how to apply for a financial order, but required more personalised information on how to prepare for a First Directions Appointment. |
| Action  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The client was unable to afford a private solicitor but was encouraged to use Affordable Advice because of the reduced fee. They arranged an appointment with a solicitor from the Affordable Advice panel, who was able to guide them through that stage of their case. |
| Outcome  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The solicitor appointment helped the client to feel more confident and improve the specific circumstances of their case. ➤ “I was extremely stressed. The solicitor made it all so much easier. She has a lovely manner and makes you feel very comfortable, able to communicate and explain all the legal processes and details in an easy to understand clear and concise way”. |

Although LawWorks and Support Through Court have not captured quantitative data related to legal capability, client case studies suggest that their services are also improving client understanding of their issue, the legally possible outcomes and what to expect at court, as illustrated in the case study within Figure 17.

Figure 17: Support Through Court and RCJ Advice case study

| Stream 3 case study | |
|---|--|
| STC-RCJ Advice increase client’s capabilities and confidence for ongoing safeguarding and child arrangement proceeding | |
| Problem  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A client with two children had safeguarding concerns regarding her ex-partner’s substance misuse issues. The client needed support ahead of the upcoming child arrangement proceeding. |
| Action  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support Through Court provided the client with practical, procedural and emotional support for her upcoming court hearing, and referred her to the solicitor at RCJ Advice. ➤ The client received several appointments via video call with the RCJ Advice solicitor to assist her with the upcoming court hearing. |
| Outcome  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The client reported that the solicitor appointments increased her knowledge and confidence about the upcoming court hearing, helped her to feel more prepared for what to expect, and helped her to feel less intimidated of the court process. ➤ The client was satisfied with the support received and found the video calls extremely helpful in comparison to previous telephone calls. ➤ The client also appreciated the support provided by having STC attend the court hearings, saying that “It was reassuring that someone was on my side, listening in. especially as I don’t always fully remember what they have said, it was very useful to have someone to talk it through with afterwards”. |

Table 16: Legal capability outcomes for all local and regional LSLIP clients, compared to clients with family and employment problems

| | All areas of law | | | Family | | | Employment | | |
|--|------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring |
| Clients understand their problem and are aware that it might have a legal remedy | 93% | 1,100 | 6 | 75% | 230 | 4 | 98% | 840 | 3 |
| Clients have an understanding of the legally possible outcomes of their problem | 81% | 1,000 | 7 | 77% | 250 | 5 | 81% | 670 | 4 |
| Stage 3a/3b clients have an increased understanding of court processes and what to expect when self-representing in court | 83% | 300 | 5 | 90% | 240 | 4 | 53% | 20 | 3 |

Table 17: Legal capability outcomes for all local and regional LSLIP clients, by stage²¹

| | Stage 1 | | | Stage 2 | | | Stage 3a and 3b | | |
|--|------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring |
| Clients understand their problem and are aware that it might have a legal remedy | 94% | 800 | 4 | 90% | 230 | 4 | 100% | 70 | 2 |
| Clients have an understanding of the legally possible outcomes of their problem | 74% | 590 | 4 | 83% | 220 | 4 | 100% | 60 | 2 |
| Stage 3a/3b clients have an increased understanding of court processes and what to expect when self-representing in court | | | | | | N/A | 80% | 370 | 3 |

²¹ To note that these volumes may not match the volumes in Table 16, as some outcomes are reported as 'cross-stage' which are not captured here.

6.3 Identifying and pursuing a problem resolution strategy with confidence

Key Points

- Once an individual has an understanding of their problem and awareness that it might have a legal remedy, they must be able to identify and pursue an appropriate course of action to resolve it.
- Local and regional grantees reported that 76% of litigants in person were aware of any action they must take to prepare for the next step of their problem resolution journey and 66% have increased confidence and ability to take action to deal with their own problems.
- The national LSLIP partners are also helping clients to pursue an appropriate course of action. Qualitative feedback from Support Through Court suggests that engagement with their services are also increasing the confidence of clients to take the next step of their journey.

Once an individual has an understanding of their problem and awareness that it might have a legal remedy, they must be able to identify and pursue an appropriate course of action to resolve it. Local and regional grantees have measured three indicators relating to the ability of clients to use the information provided by the adviser to identify a course of action to resolve their problem and have the confidence to pursue that action.

Table 18 and 19 on p.75 provide a breakdown of how these outcomes have been achieved across the stages and draws comparisons between all clients, employment and family. The outcomes for other areas of law have not been compared at this stage of the grant as the samples are too small to reliably draw inferences, but this will be explored in the final evaluation report.

Following the support from local and regional LSLIP grantees, 76% of litigants in person were aware of any action they must take to prepare for the next step of their problem resolution journey.

This is based on a sample of 500 clients across all areas of law (which is around 6% of all local and regional LSLIP clients), measured by 4 of the 8 local and regional grantees.

The achievement of this outcome is reasonably steady between areas of law, but there is some variation in this outcome between stages of advice. As with the legal capability outcomes, the number of clients achieving this outcome increases to 100% at stages 3a and 3b, which may be due to the more intensive, specialist support offered at these later stages and the more formalised route to resolution as a result to engagement with the formal justice system. However, the sample size is smaller at this stage (less than 100 clients) so more data is required to validate this finding.

Following the support from local and regional LSLIP grantees, 66% of litigants in person have increased confidence and ability to deal with their own problems.

This is based on a sample of 660 clients (around 8% of all local and regional LSLIP clients), measured by 6 of the 8 local and regional grantees.

“We helped clients identify evidence which would support their case, and helped them to access [information]...and gave clients the confidence that they knew what was required at the telephone hearing and were able to conduct this themselves or with the help of a friend.” (North East)

Grantees have submitted several case studies outlining how the support provided has helped clients to plan a course of action and carry it out with increased confidence, such as the example within Figure 18.

Figure 18: Regional LSLIP partner case study

| Stream 2 case study | |
|---|--|
| Former employee receives advice to successfully obtain backdated salary | |
| <p>Problem</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A client had been working a 20-hour week as agreed at the commencement of her role in 2018 but had only been paid for 16 of those hours. The discrepancy only came to light when the hours and location of her job changed in early 2021. At this point she checked her pay history and realised the error. ➤ The client believed that employer records would prove her working hours but lacked the confidence in making the necessary formal written communications to make this request. |
| <p>Action</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The service provided clear advice to explain the client’s legal rights, outlined an action plan, and described the actions required by both the client and caseworker at each stage in the case. ➤ With assistance, the client wrote several letters to her employer briefly outlining her contractual rights, and politely asking for her wages to be backdated, including requests for the release of documentation that would evidence her claim. |

Stream 2 case study

| | |
|---|--|
| Outcome  | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ After several weeks of communication, the employer agreed to make a backdated payment of £8,000 to the client.➤ The client was relieved that the problem had been resolved and resulted in her receiving the money without her having to pursue this at court, which lifted her stress. This increased the client's confidence and capability to pursue such claims in the future, as she better understood her rights and the necessary steps to take. |
|---|--|

There is some variation in the achievement of this outcome between employment and family clients and between stages of advice, however the sample sizes are small and therefore more data is required to validate these findings. The variation may be due to the differences in the nature of the problems, for example, family problems can be particularly fraught if there are children or domestic violence involved, and clients with employment issues may feel less confident in their ability to deal with a problem with a large employer. Across the majority of problems, LSLIP services are supporting vulnerable clients with often very complex, serious problems, facing an unfamiliar process, and therefore high levels of confidence may not be expected.

Qualitative feedback from Support Through Court suggest that engagement with their services are also increasing the confidence of clients to take the next step of their journey.

Support Through Court spoke of how many clients that they advised via the National Helpline had never experienced legal problems before and lacked the awareness of where to seek support. The phoneline was a “lightbulb moment” and helped these individuals take the next step of their problem resolution journey, and access legal advice via the RCJ Advice family solicitor, other Local Citizens Advice and online tools such as CourtNav.

Table 18: Course of action outcomes for all local and regional LSLIP clients, compared to clients with family and employment problems

| | All areas of law | | | Family | | | Employment | | |
|--|------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring |
| Clients are aware of any action they must take to prepare for the next step of their problem resolution journey, including any preparation required before court. | 76% | 500 | 4 | 75% | 260 | 3 | 74% | 200 | 2 |
| Clients have increased confidence and ability to deal with their problems. | 66% | 660 | 6 | 81% | 220 | 5 | 47% | 250 | 4 |

Table 19: Course of action outcomes for all local and regional LSLIP clients, by stage²²

| | Stage 1 | | | Stage 2 | | | Stage 3a and 3b | | |
|--|------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring |
| Clients are aware of any action they must take to prepare for the next step of their problem resolution journey, including any preparation required before court. | 63% | 120 | 2 | 72% | 260 | 4 | 100% | 70 | 3 |
| Clients have increased confidence and ability to deal with their problems. | 40% | 170 | 1 | 60% | 160 | 3 | 80% | 170 | 3 |

²² To note that these volumes may not match the volumes in Table 18, as some outcomes are reported as 'cross-stage' which are not captured here.

6.4 Problem resolution before court or Tribunal

Key Points

- LSLIP is providing a range of advice along the problem resolution journey, including early advice and support through to representation at court or Tribunal if engagement with the formal justice system is required. The goal is to encourage earlier resolution, whilst providing a holistic range of support that meets client needs.
- Local and regional grantees have captured data on whether the advice led to problems resolved before a court or Tribunal hearing was required, to the best of their knowledge. This data therefore should be interpreted with some care.
- Local and regional grantees reported that 62% of litigants in person resolved their problems with the support of the advice and assistance and avoided the need to go to court/Tribunal.

LSLIP is providing a range of advice along the problem resolution journey, including early advice and support through to representation at court or Tribunal if engagement with the formal justice system is required. The goal is to encourage earlier resolution, whilst providing a holistic range of support that meets client needs.

To measure whether their services helped to achieve earlier problem resolution, the Ministry of Justice explored linking LSLIP and HMCTS data. This was not deemed feasible due to concerns associated with seeking the appropriate consent from clients to share their data with the Ministry of Justice, the pressure this may place on frontline providers and the resource required to conduct the data linking. Instead, a pragmatic approach was taken and local and regional grantees have captured data on whether the advice led to problems resolved before a court or Tribunal hearing was required, to the best of their knowledge. This data therefore should be interpreted with some care, as there may be instances where the client's problem escalates or re-emerges unbeknownst to the adviser.

Tables 20 and 21 on p.80 provide a breakdown of how these outcomes have been achieved across the stages and draws comparisons between all clients, employment clients and family clients. The outcomes for other areas of law have not been compared at this stage of the grant as the samples are too small to reliably draw inferences, but this will be explored in the final evaluation report.

Following support from local and regional LSLIP grantees, 62% of litigants in person resolved their problems with the support of the advice and assistance and avoided the need to go to court/Tribunal.

This is based on a sample of 3,900 clients (around 47% of all local and regional LSLIP clients), measured by 6 of the 8 local and regional grantees.

The achievement of this outcome differs between employment and family issues, however these problems have different characteristics and problem resolution journeys, which means their likelihood of interacting with the formal justice system differs. For example, many employment disputes will progress to Acas or an Employment Tribunal if the individual has exhausted the internal grievance procedures. This was the case for the client in the case study in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Regional LSLIP partner case study

| Stream 2 case study | |
|---|---|
| Employee on long-term sick leave supported to receive 2-years' holiday backpay | |
| Problem  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A client had been employed for over five years, but had been on sick leave for almost two years after an accident at work. No holiday pay had been received during this time and the client contacted his employer by telephone to inquire about his entitlement to holiday pay while on sick leave. ➤ The client was told by his employer that there was no entitlement while he is on sick leave and was informed they had checked with the company accountant who had confirmed this. |
| Action  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contact was made with Citizens Advice by the client to check if this was accurate and was advised while he was on sick leave he continued to accrue his entitlement to holiday pay, therefore, he was now owed pay for at least five to six weeks holiday for the last two years. ➤ Advice was provided on the client's rights and that he can challenge his employer over the matter, and that if a claim were to get to court the client was certain to succeed. ➤ Citizens Advice explained the process of pursuing the matter, first by submitting a formal written grievance, then contacting Acas, and if this fails, to submit a claim for the money to the Employment Tribunal. |
| Outcome  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The service assisted with the grievance letter, which the client submitted to his employer and the client also followed advice by contacting Acas to request 'Early Conciliation'. ➤ After back and forth communication between Acas and the client's employer, the employer agreed to pay more than £4,500 to the client. ➤ The client mentioned that the advice and assistance provided him with the necessary information and increased his confidence that he would not otherwise have held to challenge and remedy this issue with his employer. |

This earlier resolution can have far reaching benefits for the clients, their families and the other side to the dispute. The case study within Figure 20 details how a local LSLIP partner limited the escalation of the issue, to the benefit of the client and his children. The case study within Figure 21 details how another local LSLIP partner intervened to prevent their client from further inappropriate behaviour.

Figure 20: Local LSLIP partner case study

| Stream 1 case study | |
|--|---|
| Family issue resolved through mediation | |
| Problem  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The client had separated from his partner and moved out of the family home, which was jointly mortgaged. The couple have two young children and the client was being threatened by his ex-partner with removal of all contact with the children. |
| Action  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The local LSLIP partner advised the client to actively pursue mediation to resolve child contact and the family finances. It was explained that this was a more appropriate route to follow than court proceedings, and had the benefits of being cheaper, quicker and less contentious for the children. |
| Outcome  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The early advice limited the escalation of the issue. The client was provided with a short guide to Family Mediation and signposted to a local family mediation scheme. |

Figure 21: Regional LSLIP partner case study

| Stream 1 case study | |
|--|--|
| Vulnerable client helped to understand their inappropriate behaviour and prevent a family issue from escalating | |
| Problem  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The client was very vulnerable, with multiple presenting issues. English was his second language which meant there was a significant language barrier. ➤ He had been through contested Children Act proceedings four years earlier, with a court order for contact with his son following a divorce. His ex-wife had moved a significant distance away and he had lost contact with his son. ➤ He had taken to contacting his ex-wife in excess of 100 times a day, in attempts to arrange contact with the son. He was very angry, desperate and upset, and requested help to complete and send his partially completed C100 application. |
| Action  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The adviser discovered that he had received a recent letter from his ex-wife's solicitors, making attempts to open negotiations for new contact arrangements. The adviser was able to calm the client down and talk him through the kind of proposal that he could realistically put forward, acknowledging that the distance and his various health conditions meant that the contact could never be how he wanted it to be. A letter was drafted on his behalf to the ex-wife's solicitors, containing his proposals for contact. ➤ The client was also helped to understand that despite his strong feelings, it was inappropriate and potentially harmful to his cause to telephone his ex-wife to that extent. |

Stream 1 case study

Outcome



➤ A new court application and potential injunctive applications on the client's ex-wife's part were averted.

For problems that did require a formal justice system intervention, the advice and support at 3a and 3b appears to have helped the case help the case to run more smoothly, take less time in court and achieve satisfactory outcomes. These measures are based on the advice organisation's assessment of the case from their perspective and so are not verified, independent measures, and may need be supplemented with further evidence to support these findings.

Following the support from local and regional LSLIP grantees, 57% of cases took less time in court and 88% of cases had satisfactory outcomes.

This is based on a very small sample of 60 clients (around 5% of all local and regional LSLIP clients advised at stage 3a and 3b), the majority of which had family legal problems. Much more data is needed to verify how stable this data is, and whether it is consistent across other problem types. It is also important to note that there are a number of factors that can affect how smoothly proceedings run, how long the hearing takes and the outcome of the case, and so these outcomes may not be wholly attributable to the advice provided. For the final evaluation report, the feasibility of gathering further evidence from court staff will be explored.

Table 20: Earlier resolution outcomes for all local and regional LSLIP clients, compared to clients with family and employment problems

| | All areas of law | | | Family | | | Employment | | |
|--|------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring |
| Clients who resolved their problems with the support of generalist advice, casework and early specialist legal assistance (stage 1 and stage 2 advice), avoiding the need to go to court. | 62% | 3,900 | 6 | 79% | 1,300 | 4 | 11% | 1,200 | 4 |

Table 21: Earlier resolution outcomes for all local and regional LSLIP clients, by stage²³

| | Stage 1 | | | Stage 2 | | | Stage 3a | | |
|--|------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring |
| Clients who resolved their problems with the support of generalist advice, casework and early specialist legal assistance (stage 1 and stage 2 advice), avoiding the need to go to court. | 67% | 3,100 | 3 | 34% | 410 | 4 | 48% | 330 | 4 |

²³ To note that these volumes may not match the volumes in Table 20, as some outcomes are reported as 'cross-stage' which are not captured here.

6.5 Client satisfaction with the service received and the outcome of their issue

Key Points

- Local and regional grantees measured the overall client satisfaction with the service received and the outcome of their issue.
- Following the support from local and regional grantees 81% of clients made a positive self-assessment of the support and the outcome of their issue.

Local and regional grantees have reported the percentage of clients that are satisfied with the support received and the outcome of their issue, which many recorded via feedback forms and surveys. Client satisfaction may be influenced by whether the client achieved the outcome they had hoped for, and so this may not be an accurate reflection of the quality of the service.

Following the support from local and regional LSLIP grantees, 81% of clients made a positive self-assessment of the support and the outcome of their issue.

Tables 22 and 23 provide a breakdown of how this outcome has been achieved across the stages and draws comparisons between all clients, and clients with employment and family problems. The outcomes for other areas of law have not been compared at this stage of the grant as the samples are too small to reliably draw inferences, but this will be explored in the final evaluation report.

There is some variation in the achievement of this outcome across the areas of law, with family clients reporting higher satisfaction than employment clients. This may be reflective of the impact of the pandemic on employment issues and the routes to resolution for these problems. As previously discussed, there is currently a longer wait time for Employment Tribunals than is usually to be expected. In addition, family cases are more likely to go to court, so at the point of self-assessment clients may have a resolution to their issue, which may not necessarily be the case across other areas of law.

There is also some variation between the stages of advice, with satisfaction rising to 95% for stage 3a and stage 3b clients. This may be reflective of the more intensive, specialist support provided at this stage or clients at this stage having an increased understanding of the problem and the possible outcomes, as demonstrated in the case study within Figure 22. However, the sample size is smaller for this outcome at these stages, so these trends

will be monitored throughout the remainder of the LSLIP grant, to verify how stable they are.

Figure 22: Regional LSLIP partner case study

| Stream 2 case study | |
|---|---|
| Client receives advice and support ahead of a child arrangement hearing | |
| Problem  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A client received a letter from her ex-partner taking her to court to seek 50/50 custody of their child. The client and her ex-partner had an amicable relationship over the last 4 years so she suspected this was a reaction to her recently requesting child maintenance. ➤ The pandemic and lockdown restrictions had adversely affected the client's income as a self-employed person and as a result she made a claim for Universal Credit. Having contacted a solicitor and being quoted an upfront fee of £1,500, the client could not afford this and had to represent herself at the child arrangement hearing. |
| Action  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ With no prior experience of the court process, the client wanted to maintain the current child arrangements in the best interests of her child but was also willing to accept a proposal to increase contact between her ex-partner and their son. ➤ The client provided the LSLIP partner with paperwork she had received, which revealed that she had missed the deadline to send in an acknowledgement of receipt (Form C7). ➤ The LSLIP partner helped the client to fill in the C7, checked her statement, provided the client with the contact number of the court to explain the situation, and provided information of what to expect at a court hearing. |
| Outcome  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service became involved and a one- hour mediation session was arranged where the client and ex-partner came to a suitable agreement. The judge declined the proposal of custody being split equally as it did not benefit the child but awarded the father one day extra in the second week. ➤ The client was very happy with this outcome, the hearing going better than she had expected and was very grateful for the support received which had increased confidence in her own ability to manage the process. |

A general finding from client surveys conducted by advice organisations is that most recipients of advice report high satisfaction rates with services. For example, Citizens Advice reported that client satisfaction was 98% throughout 2019/20²⁴, with 89% of people likely or very likely to recommend the service to others.

Grantees have not been asked to record and submit data related to the specific outcomes achieved for each client due to the complexity in recording these consistently across a large range of problems and types of advice. However, some of the outcomes achieved for

²⁴ See: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/Governance/Annual%20Report-2019-20.pdf>

clients outlined within the case studies have been substantial, as demonstrated in the examples within Figure 23 and Figure 24.

Figure 23: Local LSLIP partner case study

| Stream 1 case study | |
|---|--|
| Employee discriminated at work supported to take necessary steps and secure compensation | |
| Problem  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A client contacted the service via a dedicated helpline as they had been suddenly dismissed as redundant in the absence of any prior notification, consultation or consideration of suitable alternative employment. The client was dyslexic and told that she was not to operate the tills or the coffee machine as she was too 'slow'. The claimant also regularly received demeaning comments of her abilities throughout the course of her employment. |
| Action  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The claimant believed that the employer had relied on the potentially lawful reason for dismissal (redundancy) to terminate her contract of employment as a result of her difficulty to undertake and operate till duties and coffee machinery, compared to other staff. ➤ The service provided assistance for the client to access Acas Early Conciliation and proceeded to issue the client's claim at an Employment Tribunal. |
| Outcome  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Employment Tribunal granted the application and listed a Remedy Hearing to take place. The service accompanied and represented the client at the Remedy Hearing and successfully secured a compensatory award in the sum of over £19,000 on her behalf. |

Figure 24: Regional LSLIP partner case study

| Stream 2 case study | |
|---|---|
| Vulnerable client supported to grant an injunction against her partner | |
| Problem  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A client contacted Citizens Advice after being advised by the police to seek an injunction against the father of her unborn child to protect herself and her family from her ex-partner's escalating controlling and aggressive behaviour. The client reported feeling intimidated and afraid of her ex-partner, having been subjected to angry outbursts, involving at times, both physical and verbal abuse. ➤ As the mother of a young child, with a baby due in the coming months, the client explained that the injunction would help her to continue her pregnancy feeling safe. |
| Action  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The client received initial information/advice regarding support organisations and emergency procedures (i.e. contacting domestic abuse support agencies and the police). ➤ The Citizens Advice Access to Justice Project assisted the client in drafting and applying for an urgent injunction aimed at preventing the ex-partner from harassing the client, or physically approaching her or her family. |

Stream 2 case study

Outcome



- The court accepted the client's request and the injunction was granted, to be reviewed after 6 months. This allowed the client to continue her pregnancy without fear and provided a long-term safeguarding solution to protect her and the children.

Table 22: Client satisfaction outcomes for all local and regional LSLIP clients, compared to clients with family and employment problems

| | All areas of law | | | Family | | | Employment | | |
|---|------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring |
| Clients make a positive self-assessment of quality of services and satisfaction with outcomes. | 81% | 590 | 6 | 93% | 220 | 4 | 58% | 210 | 3 |

Table 23: Client satisfaction outcomes for all local and regional LSLIP clients, by stage²⁵

| | Stage 1 | | | Stage 2 | | | Stage 3a and 3b | | |
|---|------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring | % achieved | Sample size | Grantees measuring |
| Clients make a positive self-assessment of quality of services and satisfaction with outcomes. | 60% | 170 | 1 | 75% | 110 | 2 | 95% | 220 | 3 |

²⁵ To note that these volumes may not match the volumes in Table 22, as some outcomes are reported as 'cross-stage' which are not captured here.

6.6 Factors that supported and hindered the delivery of LSLIP services

Key Points

- The Covid-19 pandemic has created both challenges and opportunities for advice organisations to deliver digital and remote ways of working.
- The promotion of services raised awareness of the support available and increased their reach amongst both the public and other support organisations.
- The increased capacity of LSLIP services has enabled a more holistic approach to resolving problems and reach clients at an earlier stage.
- Partnership working, including strong communication, trust and rapport, and shared information and processes, led to stronger relationships between organisations to solidify signposting and referral links, and broadened the scope of advice available.
- Sharing best practice amongst the LSLIP network supported organisational learning and development, however, further investment in training is required to help volunteers navigate the complex system of legal support and make relevant and timely referrals.

This section explores the factors that helped and hindered the provision of LSLIP services, to offer context for how the outcomes were achieved and provide learnings for further roll out and for the sector. It is based largely on the semi-structured mid-grant interviews and regular monitoring reports, whereby organisations commented on what was felt to be working well and what could be improved.

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented challenges and opportunities for advice organisations.

With Covid-19 restrictions enforcing the closure of offices and homeworking, advice organisations swiftly adapted their services to be delivered remotely, in order to protect staff, users and volunteers during the Covid-19 pandemic and comply with restrictions to movement. These new processes and adaptations to new systems and modes of advice delivery posed both challenges and opportunities for grantees. Many of the grantees spoke of their pride in adapting their ways of working to accommodate these restrictions.

“I don’t think we anticipated that we’d quite be in this position with Covid, but I’d be hesitant to say that it has adversely affected delivery, I think we’ve just had to rethink some elements and it has worked so well in the circumstances.” (Dorset and South Somerset)

A number of grantees spoke of how the digital and remote ways of working implemented in response to the pandemic have supported partnership working, as organisations could refer clients to organisations across wider geographical locations. Remote working also helped with recruitment challenges as staff were no longer required to live and work in the town the service was based in, expanding the potential candidates that could reasonably apply for positions.

Many clients have been receptive to these new means of support as they are more flexible and accommodating to their needs and lifestyle. For example, the North and Mid Wales partnership have been using WhatsApp as a tool to share documentation, using DocuSign to enable digital signing, and shortened appointment times to offer up to three appointments remotely via the telephone.

“The pandemic enabled clients to be more receptive to this way of working and adapting to remote appointments. We were able to be innovative for example by having an appointment with a British Sign Language interpreter and we’ve had very few problems with accessing services remotely by using the telephone service or using WhatsApp to communicate and share documentation.” (North and Mid Wales)

However, these remote methods posed challenges for clients with severe vulnerabilities and complex physical and mental health problems, that needed to receive support in-person from someone they trusted. These remote methods also limited the opportunity to identify other problems clients were experiencing or identify any unforeseen or hidden vulnerabilities.

Many partnerships spoke of utilising hybrid methods of online and face-to-face appointments in order to effectively meet the needs of those that are more digitally capable and those with vulnerabilities that need face to face appointments. These hybrid methods will continue to provide multiple communication methods for clients as pandemic restrictions are eased and face-to-face appointments recommence.

To expand data and evidence in this area, the Ministry of Justice and ATJF are conducting further research into blended delivery models²⁶, to build greater understanding of the opportunities and limitations associated with different delivery methods, and the clients and problems these different communication channels work best for.

Some of the national partners were already offering remote and online services before the Covid-19 pandemic, so had a basis for scaling up and adapting to a fully remote service during the imposed lockdown periods, and therefore did not have to adapt their activities in the same way as the local and regional grantees. However, Law for Life noted that the pandemic meant that more people were more familiar with digital services and suggested that this meant their services (particularly Affordable Advice) were able to reach a larger audience than they would have otherwise. Support Through Court were the most impacted national partner and their funded activities had to pivot away from physical pods in court buildings managed by volunteers and towards providing the majority of support remotely.

All the grantees needed to keep pace with the policy and legislative changes enacted in response to the pandemic, such as the temporary stay on evictions and enforcement action. The pandemic meant that other planned legislative action (such as the Civil Liability Act) has been delayed, which has had a knock-on effect on other workstreams planned by the grantees, including Law for Life's plans to update and introduce new guides onto Advicenow.

The promotion of services raised awareness of the support available amongst both the public and other support organisations, to increase their reach.

Several grantees noted that their LSLIP project had helped to raise awareness of their overall services amongst the public and other organisations in their local area, which has increased their visibility in order to promote early advice. Several organisations spoke of how this increased awareness had helped to overcome the misconceptions about legal advice and increase the credibility of their services, particularly in comparison to the commercial legal sector.

²⁶ This qualitative research project seeks to provide an insight into how methods of advice provision have changed among LSLIP organisations since March 2020. Firstly, it seeks to understand the extent to which organisations are providing face to face advice, remote advice, or a blend of each, to meet the legal needs of clients experiencing housing, debt, or welfare problems. Secondly, it seeks to understand how clients themselves perceive these advice methods, by investigating how useful clients find face to face, remote, or blended advice methods. Thirdly, it seeks to provide a vision for the appropriate role that each of these different methods should play in future advice provision to ensure that the legal needs are effectively met across these three areas of law.

“The project has enabled greater awareness of the quality of service available and increased connections and links with commercial partners including Network for Justice services to benefit clients and being more on an equal footing in terms of advice and support available in comparison with the commercial sector.” (North and Mid Wales)

Word of mouth has been important to raise awareness among the wider partnerships, but several grantees have also undertaken specific activities to promote their services. For example:

The Dorset and South Somerset partnership have been engaging with the local council to increase visibility of the project and brief council members on the type of work being delivered.

Several partnerships, including Greater Manchester and Lancashire, and Devon and Cornwall, have been publicising their services on social media, to raise awareness of the advice provision available and discuss local community campaigns.

A number of partnerships, including Devon and Cornwall, Suffolk and Norfolk, and East and West Midlands, have been raising awareness of their services with other local stakeholders including children’s centres, domestic abuse charities, primary schools, traveller sites, local authorities and other trusted intermediaries, to engage with new client groups and expand and establish new referral pathways.

Several partnerships have projects with local universities underway. The 8 Local Citizens Advice within the North and Mid Wales partnership have a close collaboration with Bangor University, training students to become generalist advisers and undertaking research on the benefits and challenges of online advice provision. The East and West Midlands partnership have started a project with Birmingham City University to explore how to increase public legal education, and Devon and Cornwall have been publicising the services with Exeter University’s Law Clinic to raise awareness of the support available to the local community. LawWorks are working closely with Universities and Law Schools to engage with the younger cohort of lawyers that are actively seeking pro bono opportunities.

LawWorks have promoted Free Legal Answers with several referral agencies, recording informative videos on how to use the platform and offering onboarding training for organisations to ensure appropriate and effective referrals. Pro bono lawyers are central to Free Legal Answers, therefore LawWorks plan to expand

engagement with lawyers with expertise in other areas of law and encourage involvement from other lawyers from participating organisations. As part of this, LawWorks is interviewing lawyers to better understand their motivations for signing up for Free Legal Answers and to identify and address any possible barriers. Discussions are also underway with Law Centres to identify how they can use the portal.

Support Through Court raised awareness of their activities through the local Support Through Court offices. Each office has a local liaison and strong links with other advice organisations in their area.

These activities and the close partnership working have raised awareness of LSLIP services which has increased the opportunities for clients to access services, promoted early advice, and increased referrals. However, several grantees noted that it has been vital to actively maintain and manage these referral routes as clients coming to the service from these new routes can have challenging expectations of the service and outcomes for their problem, which can be difficult for their advisers. This finding was echoed in the evaluation of the Covid-19 Specialist Advice Service Scheme²⁷ which features the impact of the Community Justice Fund.

The increased capacity within the LSLIP network has enabled organisations to take a more holistic approach to resolving problems and reach clients at an earlier stage.

Many grantees have spoken of how LSLIP funding has enabled them to build additional capacity within their organisation to increase the depth and breadth of support available for clients and plug previous gaps in service offerings. This has meant that many grantees have been able to widen their geographical reach, offer advice in more areas of law than previously, and offer a wider range of advice along the problem resolution journey. For many grantees, there had been longstanding demand for advice in these areas and the funding enabled them to start addressing the gaps in their service provision, support earlier intervention and to provide a more holistic service. The Devon and Cornwall partnership were able to meet the longstanding need for family advice and the Greater Manchester and Lancashire partnership were able to help clients with employment issues.

²⁷ See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specialist-advice-service-scheme-end-of-grant-report>

“We hadn’t anticipated receiving funding and were aware of the gap in demand. Our vision was in development with previous funding but LSLIP enabled this to be facilitated.” (Devon and Cornwall)

The national grantee partners expressed a similar sentiment. Law for Life were able to fund research that they had previously not been able to conduct, including developing evaluation frameworks for their services, refining user surveys on Advicenow and exploring overarching research questions about litigants in person, legal capability and the barriers to access digital support. LawWorks reported that the LSLIP funding had given them greater resource, confidence, and stability in order to implement and expand Free Legal Answers effectively and plan for the future of the platform.

LSLIP partnership working led to stronger relationships between organisations, which solidified signposting and referral links, and broadened the scope of advice available.

Having a range of organisations in each partnership with different service offerings meant that these partnerships could offer clients holistic support and address all elements of their issues sooner, to resolve them earlier and prevent these problems from escalating.

“The LSLIP model has increased the provision of support for clients through their journey and allowed an approach to be implemented effectively that works and saves the court time and positive outcomes being achieved for clients.” (Devon and Cornwall)

For example, the partnership between Support Through Court and RCJ Advice enabled continuous and ongoing support to be provided between the two organisations through formalised, trusted referral mechanisms. Previously, Support Through Court had only been able to signpost their clients to legal help and were not able to facilitate direct access to specialist legal advice, which risked these clients not pursuing resolution for their legal issue at all.

“It’s the ongoing support that separates this project out from any of those. The fact that we give legal advice and we know that someone is going to continue to offer that support for the client through their journey is quite unique.” (RCJ Advice)

Several grantees, including North and Mid Wales, Dorset and South Somerset, and Devon and Cornwall, spoke of how they revised and strengthened their referral processes in order to effectively and efficiently coordinate with LSLIP partners and external organisations. These referrals worked particularly effectively for the partnerships with strong, well-integrated triage systems that could accurately capture and diagnose client needs, before referring clients onwards. By centralising this initial data capture and triage, the caseworkers could focus on advice provision and tailor their advice to client needs. These shared data systems have also enabled organisations to better assess and track vulnerable clients with multiple issues.

“The programme has supported further access points through a client’s journey and how they are recorded.” (Mid North Yorkshire)

The LSLIP partnerships in place created a strong foundation in which each of the grantees built and expanded further. For example, the North and Mid Wales partnership made links with the Justice and Innovation Group, and the Devon and Cornwall partnership co-hosted the south-west legal advice roundtable. This has provided these partnerships with even broader reach, a wider network of referral organisations and greater opportunity to share insights and learning.

“Expanded reach by being able to identify, connect, and collaborate with other untapped local agencies and charities with lived experiences of these issues.” (Suffolk and Norfolk)

There appears to be scope for more referrals between the local/regional and national grantees.

Increasing referrals to their services is a key focus at this point in the grant for Support Through Court and LawWorks, who have received fewer referrals to their services from the local and regional grantees than first anticipated.

Support Through Court spoke of increasing interest and interactions taking place with other LSLIP services via their local Support Through Court offices, including establishing contact with the North and Mid Wales partnership via the Cardiff office, the Devon and Cornwall partnership via the Bristol and Exeter offices, and liaising with the Greater Manchester and Lancashire partnership and LawWorks. Support Through Court spoke of how developing these relationships will be key for the second year of LSLIP, to extend signposting and referral activity.

LawWorks expressed the desire to maximise the number of referrals and access to Free Legal Answers, by increasing the number of clients referred to the platform by local and regional grantees. Currently, the majority of referrals originate from Support Through Court. The initial Free Legal Answers model included an element of assisted digital, with trusted intermediaries and advisers helping users to engage with the platform, therefore LawWorks anticipate a rise in engagement as face to face appointments resume.

“A challenge remains about maximising the number of people accessing FLA. The initial model was about organisations referring but also service staff to help clients to sign up to the website. We expected a higher number of people being referred and there is a need to understand how other services are using and referring into the service.” (LawWorks)

Several local and regional grantees spoke of how they were using the national LSLIP services, but mostly as a source of information and guidance. Around 11% of Advicenow users are advisers and 6% of users are in another volunteer or professional role, suggesting that their information and guides are being utilised by organisations as well as individuals informing themselves. Law for Life expressed an appetite to identify and facilitate partnered working with other organisations to enable more clients to use its resources, but time and capacity issues have limited their potential to develop these relationships.

Strengthening these links with national LSLIP partners was described as an evolving conversation, with further discussions set to take place about how to solidify these links into referral pathways. Some grantees explained that they valued the source of information and guidance but did not necessarily refer clients to these services as their clients are often very vulnerable and at crisis point and would not have the ability to engage with these digital offerings effectively. There was a concern that if they referred clients to these services and they were not able to access support, their issues would escalate and lead to

worse outcomes. Other grantees noted that their LSLIP partnerships were able to address issues locally within their networks and did not need to refer clients elsewhere.

A few grantees noted that facilitating these connections with the national organisations requires time and resource, but that they anticipated the second year of LSLIP to present opportunities to find ways for working more closely with services at a national level. In the latter half of 2021, local, regional and national grantees increased their day-to-day communications through a private online forum provided by ATJF and the Network for Justice, and national services have provided demonstrations of their services. This has increased the level of shared learning on specific issues, better understanding of capacity within the different partnerships and greater efficiency in administration through, for example, the sharing of templates.

Effective partnership working hinges on strong communication between organisations, trust and rapport, and shared information and processes.

Several grantees outlined how building strong relationships with the organisations in their partnerships has been key to building trust and rapport between services, maintaining regular communication, creating effective referral pathways and overcoming any challenges collectively. This enabled them to provide one seamless journey for clients and communicate in one voice as part of their partnerships.

To build these relationships, grantees set up project steering groups and smaller working groups to encourage collaboration between frontline staff and increase their knowledge of each organisation's offering, revise referral processes, train volunteers and staff on new processes, and amend their data management systems so that they could track and support clients through the journey of their legal issue. Several service partners had already worked together previously (e.g. North and Mid Wales local Citizens Advice branches and Bangor University, and several services within the Dorset and South Somerset partnership) which meant that they already had a strong foundation to build on which benefitted the set up and delivery of the project.

Several grantees spoke of the difficulties associated with developing relationships remotely, and how this made training, administration and coordination between services more challenging. This was particularly the case for smaller partner organisations that did not have the same level of resources to invest in building these relationships or capture the required data and evidence.

These activities were more challenging for partnerships with organisations from different networks, which often had different service structures, ways of working, case management systems and terminology/language. For example, Support Through Court and RCJ Advice have differing eligibility criteria for their services, which could lead to difficulties transitioning between the two services. Regular communication has been crucial to support collaborative and coordinated working between the RCJ Advice solicitor and STC volunteers to address issues such as this, and any emerging problems going forward. The Mid North Yorkshire partnership spoke of how the co-supervision of staff had helped to create a shared sense of responsibility that facilitated wider learning between services. Although bridging the gaps between different organisations and networks could be challenging at times, it appears this is where some of the biggest opportunities are to increase the breadth and depth of advice available.

“Engagement between the Law Centre and Citizens Advice has been key to develop relations and work closely together. The model is now able to be expanded out to other Law Centres and Local Citizens Advice to bridge the gap between generalist and specialist advice.” (Greater Manchester and Lancashire)

Investment in training is required to help volunteers navigate the complex system of legal support and make relevant and timely referrals.

Many grantees spoke of how training was required for volunteers and generalist advisers, to support them in identifying suitable referral opportunities and making them at a timely opportunity, particularly as the partnerships and networks grow.

Some organisations, such as Support Through Court, rely heavily on volunteers who must use their discretion when triaging clients or referring them to other services. Support Through Court recognised that this can be demanding on the volunteers, who have a range of abilities and approaches, and therefore the relevance of a referral is sometimes called into question. Working with volunteers requires greater oversight than employed staff but there is a desire from both Support Through Court and RCJ Advice to develop volunteers' confidence to use numerous tools and access points to legal advice such as CourtNav and Free Legal Answers.

“We are asking volunteers to use a high level of discretion and some will understand this process and some don’t. It’s the nature of the beast. We try to encourage and coach and direct but recognise that this is the nature and range of the volunteers working on the project.” (Support Through Court)

Further organisational development and learning was supported by organisations sharing best practice with the wider LSLIP network.

Many grantees spoke about how their partnerships and wider LSLIP network had facilitated wider learning and development, by sharing best practice and insight. For example, the Suffolk and Norfolk partnership shared their experience of piloting the Justice Bus, which led many other partners to adopt similar mobile legal advisers to help them reach clients in rural areas, learning from Suffolk and Norfolk’s experience.

This organisational learning and development crossed network boundaries, with Citizens Advice and Law Centres sharing expertise and materials, developing knowledge of other specialist areas of law, and building understanding of how to productively work together. This supported the development of staff by pooling knowledge of other specialist areas of law to develop the skills of advisers, train both staff and volunteers, increase the confidence in utilising referral networks and support further learning opportunities.

“We’re likeminded and do similar types of work. It’s been reassuring and nice to be able to learn from each other. Derbyshire were keen to learn from CELC’s student work. CELC were keen to learn from Derbyshire’s ways of working and materials to benefit from sharing knowledge.” (East and West Midlands)

7. Programme management

Key Points

- The Ministry of Justice, Access to Justice Foundation and LSLIP grantees reflected on the programme management during the first year and noted that the close collaboration between all the partners has been key to LSLIP to support the service delivery of grantees and maximise the impact of the funding.
- Grantees valued the flexibility of the LSLIP programme and the supportive communication with the Access to Justice Foundation, which enabling organisations to adapt their delivery to respond to emerging legal need and focus on learning and development.
- The data monitoring and reporting created numerous learning opportunities and complexities, but many grantees found the data and evidence collected beneficial for informing their service delivery and illustrating where client demand is increasing.
- The wide range of quantitative and qualitative data collected by each grantee is informing and supporting policy discussions around ways of effectively supporting litigants in person.

The Ministry of Justice, Access to Justice Foundation and grantee organisations have worked closely over the first year of LSLIP to establish the LSLIP projects, adapt to new ways of working and establish the data collection and reporting framework. This section explores several aspects of the programme management, as reflected on by the Ministry of Justice, Access to Justice Foundation and LSLIP grantees during semi-structured interviews, in order to provide learnings for future programmes.

Collaboration between the Access to Justice Foundation, the Ministry of Justice and the LSLIP grantees has been key to LSLIP.

The close working between these partners has supported grantees to embed new processes, whilst maintaining open lines of communication, to adapt to emerging issues, make versatile decisions, establish common goals and maximise the impact of the funding.

The Access to Justice Foundation felt empowered by the Ministry of Justice grant making team to draw on their grant-making expertise and knowledge of the advice sector to shape

the programme design and monitoring mechanisms. This encouraged the Access to Justice Foundation to make reasonable adjustments that they felt would benefit the grantees and aid delivery.

“...I think the MoJ have been very supportive in terms of trying to work out who was doing what. I think that’s largely gone quite well and there’s been a lot of flexibility in trying things, changing things, because we all recognise that this is new, so I think that sort of flexible attitude on the part of us, the MoJ and the grantees has been really positive.” (Access to Justice Foundation)

The Ministry of Justice grant making team felt that the Access to Justice Foundation has handled the LSLIP grant management well during a challenging first year. Several new staff have joined the grant management team since the programme began, but the wide-ranging expertise of the team and senior leadership have ensured the grant had been well-managed by establishing positive relations, early communication and transparency with the Ministry of Justice. This included having regular meetings to discuss key areas of interest, ongoing risks, future plans for the programme, and the advice sector more broadly.

The Access to Justice Foundation were pleased that the regular open communication with the Ministry of Justice was continuing beyond the initial set-up period, to continue to develop the relationship between the two organisations. The regular meetings have helped to share feedback, understand the changing demand in the sector, and reflect on the progress of each quarterly reporting.

There were some initial challenges in the initial set up of the programme, which were exacerbated by the onset of the pandemic.

As it was the first time the Ministry of Justice and Access to Justice Foundation had run a grant in this way, it was expected that there would be some challenges in the initial set up, but these were exacerbated by the pandemic, which required substantial adaptations to the initial LSLIP grant structure and frontline advice delivery. However, these changes brought several unforeseen benefits and allowed greater collaboration with between the two organisations. The strong working relationship and regular communication ensured that the grant shifted focus efficiently.

Ministry of Justice colleagues expressed appreciation for the way the grantees and the Access to Justice Foundation worked with dedication to respond to new demands and rapidly pivot their delivery in response to the pandemic. With understanding of the grantees' resources and limitations, the Access to Justice Foundation was able to provide support and flexibility where needed, to ensure organisations could respond effectively to changing demand whilst continuing to deliver on the programme's objectives.

Grantees expressed a great sense of pride in how quickly their services were set up and started making positive achievements for clients. However, the initial set up period was generally challenging as a result of having to adapt services to new ways of working, improve and enhance referral processes, establish relationships between services, recruit new staff and accommodate the data and monitoring requirements, in a relatively short period of time.

As previously mentioned, recruiting specialist legal advisers for LSLIP has been particularly challenging, as organisations are competing with the private sector that can offer more competitive salaries and longer-term contracts, that provide greater stability and security. Grantees have expressed concerns about their ability to retain staff as the end of the funding period approaches, as these members of staff begin to look for alternative employment. This will impact on the service that they can provide, the volumes of clients they can reach and the outcomes they can achieve. This is a sector wide issue which the Access to Justice Foundation is involved in addressing through other partnership working, including the Community Justice Fund.

“Trying to recruit people to the profession when it’s unstable in terms of funding is very difficult. To have a social welfare law system, you need high quality people and keep them, which won’t happen with an unstable system. As soon as they want to progress, buy a house or start a family, they will go.” (East and West Midlands)

The speed of the initial set up was also a challenge for the Access to Justice Foundation, who worked rapidly with grantees to establish projects, whilst setting up systems to manage the monitoring and reporting requirements, the differing funding periods across the funding streams, and providing advice and support to grantees. This support has been ongoing and grantees continue to have one to one grant management meetings with the Access to Justice Foundation each quarter, which provide an opportunity to ask questions, discuss challenges and find solutions. This close engagement has helped to overcome

any initial teething issues. There is a great feeling of pride amongst the Access to Justice Foundation grant management team towards the monitoring and evaluation work achieved to date as this was one of the biggest challenges of the initial set up period.

Grantees across each of the funding streams greatly appreciated the supportive and coordinated communication with the Access to Justice Foundation.

The Access to Justice Foundation undertook a significant amount of development work, particularly with local and regional grantees, to implement different channels of communication and build relationships and trust with each of the grantees. This included arranging one to one problem-solving meetings and providing regular guidance for the data monitoring and reporting. Having these open and responsive lines of communication was not only to support grantees in the initial set up of the programme, but also to support the changing delivery of services during the pandemic.

“...The engagement and comms with the grantees are brilliant, the relationships that we’ve been able to build...we’ve been able to find out what’s really going on and what’s really working and what’s not, and we’ve been able to get a lot more detail and support them in different ways.” (Access to Justice Foundation)

Across the local, regional and national services, each partnership wholeheartedly recognised the regular, accommodating and responsive interactions with team members at the Access to Justice Foundation, particularly at the early stages of the project. This was beneficial to understand how the programme would function and what was required of them, to get service delivery underway quickly.

“ATFJ have been supportive, engaging, understanding of the constraints, and provided walkthrough support of the problems encountered. It has been a well-run and effectively managed grant.” (North East)

In addition to these one to one meetings, the Access to Justice Foundation organised quarterly grantee forums, that provided grantees with a virtual platform for networking, learning, collaborating, and having detailed discussion of the key successes and challenges across each of the partnerships. Grantees considered these forums a valuable asset that enabled them to exchange ideas with other partners. Grantees provided several recommendations to build on these in the future, including: adjusting the forums to use

them as a platform for promoting best practice and sharing experience of ‘what works’; incorporating smaller workshops for problem-solving and the discussion of key LSLIP themes and emerging policy questions; and utilising the forum on the Network for Justice website to enable less formal communication between LSLIP grantees. The Access to Justice Foundation noted that many of these suggestions are in the pipeline for future forum meetings, this included piloting the use of Slack to facilitate communication between grantees which has since been launched

Grantees valued the flexibility of the LSLIP programme, as it enabled their organisations to adapt their delivery to meet needs during the pandemic and focus on learning and development.

Grantees expressed appreciation for the flexible nature of the grant programme, which enabled them to deliver services in a way that met the needs of their local area in a creative way, with the space to focus on learning and development without fear of being penalised for missing targets. Grantees noted that this approach does not tend to be the norm with advice sector funding, which usually has set criteria and targets. Some organisations had the view that this target driven approach was not a purposeful way of targeting local need as it creates greater focus on achieving targets rather than focusing on client needs.

“LSLIP has provided the opportunity to think deeply about ways of working – we have appreciated this opportunity as it has provided a massive strength to the service delivery.” (Greater Manchester and Lancashire)

The flexibility in the delivery of advice was particularly appreciated during the pandemic, where there were many unknowns. Services were able to be responsive to the demand presenting to them and provide the appropriate advice, without concern for missing targets. This was particularly important for grantees providing later stage advice, which was affected by the closure of courts, backlogs in cases and temporary policies enacted, such as the stay on evictions and enforcement action. The flexibility of the grant meant that organisations could quickly pivot their provision to focus on advice at earlier stages and casework. Feedback from LSLIP grantees and further sector wide learning gathered by the Access to Justice Foundation and other trusts and foundations, emphasised the importance of flexibility and core cost funding to efficiently meet demand. This feedback has been adopted into the strategy of the Community Justice Fund, currently supported by the Ministry of Justice Sector Sustainability Grant.

The data monitoring and reporting created numerous learning opportunities and complexities for all the grantees.

While grantees had experienced collecting and reporting data as part of previous funding requirements, integrating the LSLIP data monitoring and reporting processes was a challenging task for grantees during the early stages of the programme, and required substantial efforts.

“The data management was a learning process due to large volumes of data. However, the narratives and case studies helped to understand the data by providing greater context to fill in any gaps.” (Mid and North Yorkshire)

Many grantees spoke about a lack of analytical expertise or resource within their organisation to support this process. However, they reported being able to integrate the requirements by working closely with other services in their partnership and the Access to Justice Foundation. The Access to Justice Foundation helped to translate the granular detail of the evaluation framework into practical terms and provided one to one support to grantees to familiarise them with the requirements. The Access to Justice Foundation spoke of how it was rewarding to see the data evolve every quarter, to see earlier challenges addressed and an increase in the quality of the data spreadsheets, written monitoring reports and case studies.

Collecting and collating data was particularly complicated for large partnerships with organisations from different advice networks, due to differences between working practices and case management systems. This meant that some partners had to adjust their processes after delivery had begun or increase resource within their management teams to support data collection and reporting and ensure consistency across all the partners. Similarly, this process was a challenge for the smaller organisations that had less time and resource to manage these requirements, and for grantees that did not have access to case management systems and had less direct appointment-based client engagement.

A single data collection and reporting framework was adopted in order to collate data from across the programme, however this single framework was challenging to implement as LSLIP partners are from a variety of advice networks with different practices. There were several issues with consistency of definitions which required amendments to the reporting process and took several quarterly cycles to address, due to the time lag with reporting. This is a challenge inherent to utilising one data and reporting system across several

grantees with different working practices, delivery methods, capability and resource. There was engagement with a few organisations from different advice networks in early 2020 to explore and refine the LSLIP data collection requirements to ensure that they were feasible, however, a couple of several grantees expressed a desire for greater co-design of the evaluation framework to have the opportunity to feed into the design of the data collection and reporting processes.

Whilst the data and reporting requirements have been challenging, many grantees noted that the data and evidence they have collected has been helpful for informing their service delivery and illustrating where client demand is increasing for particular areas and stages of law. The data and evidence demonstrate the positive outcomes achieved for clients, which can be used within future funding applications.

“...This pilot project will help us get that information to find out what’s working and if partnerships working locally, regionally, mean less service hopping for end users and that end users get to where they need to be sooner, so their matters are resolved sooner.” (Access to Justice Foundation)

The approach to monitoring and reporting was a particular challenge for the national grantees, whose activities did not fit into the framework well.

Using a consistent monitoring and reporting framework across LSLIP services was desirable to aid the overall management of LSLIP reporting and to be able to collate data across the grant, but developing a framework that suited all the grantees was a challenge and initially did not align well with the services provided by the national grantees.

This was particularly the case for Law for Life, who were funded to generate research and evidence and to provide a Public Legal Education service, and therefore their activities differed from traditional advice services and were unique amongst LSLIP partners. This meant that the initial framework did not match their interventions and needed several iterations to adapt it to their funded work, which delayed the initiation of their activities. Greater consideration of how research would be integrated into the reporting framework was recommended by Law for Life, so that they would be able to gain a clearer understanding of the research requirements prior to the project commencing.

“The initiation stage of the project took much longer than anticipated, toing and froing, looking at the data templates... This took time before we got to the point where we got the monitoring, knew what we were going to monitor and then be able to start to deliver.” (Law for Life)

There were some additional challenges for the national grantees that do not utilise case management systems that can capture granular information on people and their problems (with the exception of RCJ Advice) and whose reporting period falls in the middle of the month. In reflection of these factors, the national grantees have been analysed independently of the other LSLIP grantees.

Whilst the development of a consistent framework that is inclusive of the national grantee services has been challenging, Support Through Court, RCJ Advice and Law for Life welcomed the positive early engagement with the Ministry of Justice and the Access to Justice Foundation and encouraged the future co-production of projects between Ministry of Justice and the advice sector.

The wide range of data collected across each partnership is informing and supporting policy discussions around ways of effectively supporting litigants in person.

Complementing quantitative data with impactful narrative case studies has enabled the programme to capture the risks, opportunities and successes encountered by grantees. This evidence is informing policy discussions about effective means of legal support and contributing towards a more compelling case for future funding.

8. Looking to the future (post 2022)

Key Points

- Reflecting on what may happen to the services and partnership working as the current LSLIP programme ends in June 2022, several grantees spoke of the desire to sustain or expand their delivery models and/or partnerships to continue to be able to address the complex problems in their communities and more widely.
- To sustain or expand LSLIP delivery models, including retaining skilled staff and advisers, grantees noted the required stable source of longer-term funding.
- Over the next few years, one of the Access to Justice Foundation's priorities will be to ensure that LSLIP data, evidence and learning is disseminated and used effectively with wider audiences.

The Legal Support Action Plan committed to increasing the Ministry of Justice funding for the Litigants in Person Support Strategy to £3 million for two years, so the current LSLIP programme will end in June 2022. Partners were asked to reflect on what might happen to the services and partnership working they had established for their LSLIP programme, when the funding comes to an end.

Several grantees spoke of the desire to sustain their partnerships, to continue to be able to address the complex problems in their communities.

Several grantees also spoke of the potential to expand their delivery models to other areas of law and/or geographical areas, utilising the learning from the project so far. For example, the North and Mid Wales partnership spoke of the potential to use remote delivery methods to expand the delivery model more widely across Wales, and the Devon and Cornwall partnership have intentions to scale up their model to include other areas of law in the future. Within the Access to Justice Foundation, there is the desire to set up and sustain similar models developed in the LSLIP programme elsewhere in England and Wales.

“Ambition to seek further funding to maintain partnership, maintain a holistic and client-centred approach that ends the postcode lottery, ensuring clients receive a consistent service, and continue partnership working together.” (North East)

Several grantees argued that stable, longer-term funding was needed in order to offer their skilled advisers the longer-term job stability and security needed to retain them.

Grantees shared concern that as the end of the LSLIP programme nears, they will lose these members of staff and will need to scale back their service offering, which will have a negative impact on their ability to meet the legal needs of their local areas. If this were to occur, managing the expectations of their clients, and volunteers, would be critical to ensure they are aware of what will be realistically attainable for their problems.

“Within our other resources we don’t have the capacity to do this because of the demands. [The LSLIP support] feels like a very specific add-on which would be lost without this resource and client expectations would be an issue to manage.” (RCJ Advice)

Funding gaps can be particularly frustrating for advice services, as it means they enter an unpredictable, challenging cycle of staff recruitment, development and loss of expertise.

“If there’s a funding gap we will lose the person we struggled to recruit, and they will probably go to private practice. I’ve been at CELC for 12 years, when we lost legal aid funding, there was a huge drain of experienced advisors for social welfare law. Trying to tempt people back is impossible, they won’t take a considerable salary drop.” (East and West Midlands)

Grantees were concerned that they would struggle to access funding from other sources to sustain or enhance their LSLIP model, as other funders have specific areas of focus, hard targets and less focus on preventative work.

LSLIP data, evidence and learning needs to be disseminated with wider audiences and used effectively.

The Access to Justice Foundation noted that the priority over the next few years will be to ensure that LSLIP data, evidence and learning is disseminated with wider audiences. This work is already underway and key to this development will be the continued strategic conversations about the scalability and future financial sustainability of the LSLIP model, and how to continue to work in partnership to address long-term evidence needs that support earlier intervention for litigants in person.

“...I think with the Ministry of Justice we need to be looking at the bigger picture, what’s available, what funding is available, what’s needed, so that we can do that most effectively.” (Access to Justice Foundation)

9. Conclusion

Grantees have gone to significant efforts to set up their LSLIP services and work in partnership with several organisations in their local areas to increase access to advice for litigants in person. This report provides some early insight into the positive outcomes the LSLIP services are achieving for clients. This includes improving client understanding of their problem and the route to resolution, improving their confidence and ability to take this action, resolving problems at an earlier stage, better equipping the litigants in person that are representing themselves at court, and improving their clients' situations in a myriad of other ways.

To demonstrate these benefits through data and evidence, grantees quickly got to grips with unfamiliar data and evidence requirements, adapting their working practices and training staff to capture additional data and evidence within their case management systems.

Project set-up, implementation and monitoring have been complex and involved challenges with adapting to the evolving Covid-19 environment, recruiting specialist caseworkers, and fulfilling the data and evidence requirements. The Access to Justice Foundation grant management team has provided ongoing support to help grantees resolve or adapt to many of these challenges. The flexible nature of the funding has also enabled grantees to adapt their advice offer to meet local needs and respond to the changing Covid-19 environment.

This review presents several learnings to take forward over the remaining period of LSLIP. For example:

Partnership working will continue to be promoted, encouraging greater collaboration between the local and regional grantees and Support Through Court, LawWorks and Law for Life.

Demand for LSLIP services will be monitored, as there is anecdotal evidence that the demand for advice will substantially increase as organisations start offering more face to face work and vulnerable clients start to present to services with deeply entrenched problems they have 'stored' over the pandemic.

As the end of the grant nears, partners will monitor any difficulties retaining staff and the impact this has on service provision. If specialist staff leave, grantees will be required to

manage client expectations for what can be provided, and/or pivot their delivery towards greater generalist advice. This will also impact on the data collected and will need to be reflected in the evaluation.

The possibility of streamlining the data collection requirements will be explored using insight from the mid-grant review on data availability and quality, to reduce the burden on grantees. This is particularly important as grantees begin to reach full capacity and have less bandwidth for monitoring and reporting.

This review explored the impact of the local and regional grantees in aggregate and the national grantees individually, in order to balance detail with brevity at this stage of the grant. Over the remaining funding period, the priority for the evaluation will be to explore the different LSLIP delivery models in more depth, the outcomes they are achieving and whether they can be replicated or scaled up.

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Appendix A: LSLIP logic model

A logic model is a diagram that shows a causal connection between the identified need, the intervention activities and how this makes a difference for individuals and communities in the short and long term. A logic model can help with programme planning and evaluation, and build common understanding about what the programme is, how it works and what it is trying to achieve. It was anticipated that the outputs would relate to specific grant activities and so these were not specified in the overarching logic model.

| Inputs | Activities | Initial outcomes | Longer term outcomes |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>This grant will aim to enhance services that support the earliest possible interventions for LIPs, and increase our understanding of the stages they move through as they interact with the justice system. The grant will be formed of three funding streams:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scaling up provision of organisations or hubs. 2. Developing services for LIPs in geographic areas where there are currently gaps in provision. 3. Supporting national projects across England and Wales. <p>These projects will be administered by the ATJF, in partnership with MOJ.</p> | <p>Funding streams 1 and 2 will encompass activities that target LIPs at three stages of their journey to resolving their legal issue...</p> <p><u>Stage 1 - earlier intervention via community navigation:</u> Engage people who may have a legal remedy to their problem/s but are unaware of this. Resolve the causes of their financial hardship at the earliest opportunity through skilled triage or generalist advice to diagnose the problems, followed by assistance to prevent the need for court action.</p> <p><u>Stage 2 – later intervention via specialist casework:</u> Provide specialist casework to the most vulnerable clients who approach advice agencies about possible action, uncovering all their legal needs to resolve problem-clusters before court.</p> | <p>Streams 1 & 2 outcomes <u>Stage 1 and 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LIPs understand their current problem and are aware that it might have a legal remedy. • LIPs have an understanding of the legally possible outcomes of their problem. • LIPs are aware of any action they must take to prepare for the next step of their problem resolution journey. This includes any preparation required before going to court (such as evidence requirements and entitlements). • Where appropriate, individuals are referred internally or externally to other sources of advice in a timely manner, including pro bono advice, and/ or signposted to other problem resolution methods such as ADR. (Note: The utility of signposting will be subject to the capacity of other providers). | <p><u>Better quality of outcomes for LIPs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LIPs are more able to enforce their rights in accordance with the law. • Problems are resolved more quickly at lower financial and emotional cost. • Problems remain resolved. • Positive self-assessment of quality of services and satisfaction with outcomes. <p><u>Legal advice/service impacts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More cases are settled before reaching court, reducing court time. • Stronger ties between frontline agencies and national support, results |

| Inputs | Activities | Initial outcomes | Longer term outcomes |
|--------|---|--|--|
| | <p><u>Stage 3 – at court:</u> Provide legal advice and representation.</p> <p>Funding stream 3 will involve national scale projects with activities such as... Delivering advice, information or support through non face-to-face methods through the use of technology. Using existing or developing new infrastructure to increase the reach of existing national initiatives/services. Proactively embedding the use of these national initiatives/ services with grantees to promote their use and value to litigants in person.</p> <p><u>Target population</u> Individuals on low income that do not have the means to pay for private services but are not eligible for legal aid. Existing data and evidence shows that this group have high levels of vulnerability.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIPs resolve their problems earlier, avoiding going to court, with the support of generalist advice and casework or specialist legal assistance. <p><u>Stage 3</u>²⁸</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Court cases are resolved more swiftly with advice and/or representation from an 'on the day' scheme. <p>Stream 3 (national projects) outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIPs report increased understanding of court processes and what to expect when self-representing in court. LIPs report increased confidence and ability to deal with their own problems or find appropriate face-to-face assistance locally. | <p>in agencies feeling better equipped and more confident to utilise alternative forms of support, including: online resources, specialist forms of support and pro bono representation.</p> |

²⁸ After consultation in the early design stages of the programme, stage 3 was subsequently divided into stages 3a and 3b.