

# Advice in Community Settings

## Key Findings from Year 2 Evaluation

The Mayor of London launched the Advice in Community Settings grant programme in 2022. It funds 11 advice partnerships to support Londoners experiencing, or at risk of, financial hardship. The programme works with organisations that are already embedded in communities. It is helping to widen access for many who might not reach traditional advice services. In its second year, this demonstrates strong support for the continuation of the model to ensure many more community groups can readily access high quality advice services.

### 1 The programme has improved access to advice for a wide range of Londoners



The programme has supported individuals from **7,336 households**, that is at least **13,570 individuals across London**



The community-based model is **reaching Londoners who do not traditionally access advice services**



**61%** of those supported had **never accessed** advice services before



**Compared to the London branches of Citizens Advice**, the programme has been particularly successful at reaching **women, people from a Black or Black British background** and people **aged 25-44**



**42%** of advice seekers spoke a first language other than English.

“ I have a disability and was struggling with bills and things because I'm self-employed so don't always earn that much each month. She's provided wonderful advice, she's helped me to fill in application forms for benefits, income tax and housing benefit. She keeps in touch with me just in case there's anything else I need.”

Participant beneficiary

### 2 Embedding advice in community settings makes a real difference to Londoners' ability to access advice services



Different demographic groups accessed the programme via different community settings, highlighting the **importance of embedding advice services in a variety of service settings**



**72%** of advice seekers did not think the advice they had received could have been improved upon

### 3 Advice in Community Settings brought positive financial benefits to a number of beneficiaries

Across two years of delivery, to March 2024:

**£5.2m**

of total financial gain across **1,700 advice seekers** was recorded.



**one-off grants** were the most common source of financial benefits



generally all who gained financially, saw an average of **£3,065 per year**



**£8,879** was the average most common source of financial gain from debt relief/renegotiation

**Advice seekers who were supported to access benefits saw:**



An average gain of **£6,406** and **£441,464**

cumulative gain per year



**28%** had support to access new benefits

Advice seekers financial gains from Advice in Community Settings over time



Source: Client management information data, 2022- 2024

## 4 The programme improved the health, wellbeing and confidence of advice seekers



74% of beneficiaries reported that the support and advice received helped their and their family's **physical and emotional wellbeing**



77% of beneficiaries reported that they felt more **confident managing their money** in the future



“All the services that we provide wouldn't exist. The people that receive the funding here are real experts that are quickly able to give you answers on any questions and I think that is quite difficult to find in advice charities, so being able to hold on to these people is key.”

Advice worker

## 5 Longer term needs were not always met, requiring more support after engagement with the programme

The programme **successfully identified the needs of new advice seekers, often uncovering more challenging issues**. Even after seeing the advice worker, due to these **complex** needs:



79% indicated they **still needed support** in some form



79% had **ongoing unmet support needs** that arose from delays in case resolution, specialist needs or often **beyond the control of the advice partnership** i.e. third parties (DWP, Home Office, Housing Association).

“I couldn't fault her, she knew what she was doing, was nice and polite, she went through it all, went through all my details. [...] now I'm getting somewhere with this lady's help.”

New advice seeker

“I think that's been quite interesting to see that development over the last couple of years that initially it was a new project, it was kind of something that we were doing. With two years of experience behind us, it's really very much embedded in Little Village, it's shifted the way that we think about as an organization and what we can offer to families across the board.”

Advice manager

