



The Money Advice Service Debt Advice Review 2013/14

A review of the client experience with debt advice projects funded by the Money Advice Service
in England and Wales in 2013/14

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The Money Advice Service

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1 Executive Summary

Clients of the debt advice services funded by the Money Advice Service frequently come from situations where lower incomes can easily lead to problems with debt. Unemployment levels are higher than the national average (27% vs. 7%), while education levels tend to be lower (17% educated to degree level vs. a UK average of 27%). Half of the clients interviewed currently live in social housing.

Half (52%) of clients have been diagnosed with mental health conditions of some kind, most commonly depression. The relationship between these issues and current debt situations is complicated. For some, these factors preceded their debt situation; however the relationship between life events, mental health and debt is complex. Whilst debt advice providers may not have been able to help fully with these wider concerns, the majority of clients have taken action following advice to address their debt situation. For most, this resulted in debt reduction.

The most common debt types were rent/mortgage, utilities and credit cards, with around half of clients reporting multiple forms of debt. In 94% of cases, clients were able to agree actions with their advisers to address their debt issue, and 93% of clients who agreed actions went on to progress at least one of them (compared to 90% in 2012). In the period following the advice (c. 3-6 months) 76% had already reduced or cleared at least some of their debts.

This reduction in debts led to both improved feelings of wellbeing for clients, and overall satisfaction with the advice received. Four out of five felt more in control of their financial situation following the advice, 71% were less stressed about their debts, and 67% were sleeping better. For three-quarters of clients (74%), there was a feeling that their expectations of the advice had been met. The minority with lower levels of satisfaction were typically those with particularly escalated debt issues, or who were unable to agree debt control actions with an adviser.

With positive outcomes for most clients overall, debt advice was an effective option for those facing debt issues. There was a small minority who were not able to agree/progress actions with advisers and this group typically experienced worse outcomes. Additional follow-ups may help these clients.

One potential indicator which may help to identify those less likely to progress actions is the extent to which clients understand the next steps. While only a small proportion (7%) of clients did not understand what they needed to do following the advice, 40% of these did not take forward the actions they had agreed.

Please note that since the previous research in 2012, the Money Advice Service has developed a new debt advice evaluation framework. This framework was not in existence at

the time of the 2012 research and therefore in most cases the results cannot be directly compared year on year. It is intended that this research will be used as a baseline against which further research is measured.

2 Project Background and Context

2.1 Background to the Money Advice Service

As part of its remit the Money Advice Service has responsibility for the funding and co-ordination of debt advice services in the United Kingdom. The core aims of this initiative are to:

- Develop and implement a strategy for the delivery of debt advice that makes efficient use of services available and meets demands for debt advice
- Put the future of debt advice services on a more sustainable footing funded by the financial services industry

Under the Financial Services Act 2012, the Money Advice Service's statutory function includes assisting members of the public with managing debt; and working with other organisations to improve the availability, quality and consistency of debt advice services. In order to meet these, the Money Advice Service is committed to providing face-to-face debt advice for those individuals who specifically need advice delivered in a face-to-face environment, with other service users being directed to advice through other channels where appropriate.

The Money Advice Service provided grant-funding of £27 million in 2013/14 to fund the delivery of 150,000 debt advice sessions, primarily face to face, throughout England and Wales. Overseeing this predominantly face-to-face service are 16 projects, managed by six organisations (one of which manages 11 of the 16 projects, the others managing one each).

The projects are:

1. Bristol Debt Advice Centre (BDAC – South West, now Talking Money – South West)
2. Capitalise London
3. Community Finance Solutions (CFS)
4. East Midlands Money Advice (EMMA)
5. Greater Merseyside Money Advice Project (GMMAP)
6. Citizens Advice (CAB)
 - a. Disability
 - b. East
 - c. North East
 - d. North West
 - e. Prison & Probation
 - f. Rural
 - g. South East
 - h. South West
 - i. Wales
 - j. West Midlands
 - k. Yorkshire & Humber

The 16 projects are supported by around 240 participant organisations. In addition, The Money Advice Service funds further services in both Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Research in 2012 provided the Money Advice Service with an evaluation of services that implemented a shift in focus for advice providers. Compared to previous years, there was a significant increase (from 100,000 p.a. to 150,000 p.a.) in the number of clients helped. The process changes included empowering clients through one-off advice wherever appropriate, reserving casework for only those clients who need it, more drop-in sessions, and closer collaboration between debt advisers and their administrators. The review provided valuable independent data assessing the effectiveness of the debt advice delivered to clients.

2.2 Research background and objectives

The focus of the research for 2013 was different from that for 2012. The 2012 study had a strong focus on the relative role and efficacy of one-off advice vs. casework, and included a substantial qualitative element with both clients and providers. The 2013 study used a single data collection point (telephone interviews with clients) to measure the effectiveness of advice received across pre-defined measures. This approach will be replicable going forward both for future research of the Money Advice Service funded debt advice clients and for measuring the effectiveness of other debt advice providers.

The 2013 research established a clear set of metrics on which to measure the performance of advice centres. The intention is for research to be conducted on a yearly basis going forward, meaning that projects can be measured against one another in any given year, and progress can be tracked moving forward against a standardised evaluation framework.

The framework provides 15 areas of evaluation which will form a basis for comparison going forward both between different projects/organisations and for tracking purposes over time.

The 15 metrics for evaluating success are:

1. The client got the advice or information they wanted
2. The client is aware of the possible different ways of dealing with their debt problem
3. The client better understands that debtors and creditors have rights and obligations and has some idea of what these obligations are
4. The client has a clear idea about the steps they should take to sort out their debt problems
5. The client takes the steps they should to sort out their debt problems
6. If a referral is made the client follows it up and receives help from another organisation
7. The client increases their household income
8. The client is able to plan how they use their money and sticks to the plan
9. The client reduces their outgoings
10. The client pays priority bills before non-priority bills such as consumer credit
11. The client's financial situation is brought under control

12. The client knows to review their situation if their circumstances change
13. The client's outstanding debt is reducing
14. The client has appropriate contact with his/her creditors
15. The client's wellbeing improves

3 Research methodology

3.1 Data collection

The 2013 debt advice review was conducted between November 2013 and January 2014. Clients of the 16 projects funded by the Money Advice Service in England and Wales responded to a 20 minute telephone survey. In total, 1,380 interviews took place with clients across the different projects.

Sampling was proportionally representative of clients across the 16 projects, with individual clients selected at random from a pool of clients who had indicated they would be willing to participate in research. All clients had sought advice three to six months prior to the fieldwork.

All interviews were conducted between 10am and 9pm, unless clients specifically requested appointments outside those times to suit their schedule.

For full details of sampling and methodology, please refer to Appendix A.

3.2 Questionnaire details

The questionnaire was developed by the Money Advice Service team to ensure that it appropriately measured the performance details they wanted to collect. The survey was based on the evaluation framework devised by the Money Advice Service to understand client experiences in the following areas:

- the process of getting advice;
- actions taken following the advice;
- overall financial situation following the advice;
- views about the effects of the advice;
- debt status; and
- overall demographics.

Each question (aside from key classification questions) related to different elements on the evaluation framework, such that for future waves there can be direct comparability on evaluation metrics.

Minimal modifications were made by Optimisa Research to ensure the survey was suited to telephone interviewing.

Owing to the way that the Money Advice Service funded the different projects, clients were not necessarily aware of the Money Advice Service's involvement. As a result the survey was introduced with reference to the specific advice centre that provided the sample.

4 Client profiles

4.1 Demographics in relation to the UK population

Figure 1. 2013 quantitative fieldwork demographic breakdowns

	Population estimate	Debt advice clients interviewed ¹
Gender²		
Male	45%	49%
Female	55%	51%
Age³		
18-30	23%	13%
31-40	17%	18%
41-60	32%	57%
61+	28%	13%
Ethnicity⁴		
White	86%	84%
Black	3%	8%
Asian	8%	4%
Other	3%	4%
Education⁵		
Degree or higher	27%	17%
Below degree level	40%	41%
Other	10%	18%
No qualifications	23%	24%
Home Ownership⁶		
Social tenant	15%	50%
Private tenant	15%	23%
Mortgage/own home outright	66%	19%

¹ Data is not weighted to reflect actual delivery

² Mid-2009 Population Estimates: Great Britain; estimated resident population by single year of age and sex – <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-213645>

³ Mid-2009 Population Estimates: Great Britain; estimated resident population by single year of age and sex – <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-213645>

⁴ 2011 Census: Key Statistics for England and Wales, March 2011; Ethnic group of usually resident population - http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_290685.pdf

⁵ 2011 Census: Key Statistics for England and Wales, March 2011; Highest level of qualification - http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_290685.pdf

⁶ 2011 Census: Key Statistics for England and Wales, March 2011; Tenure - http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_290685.pdf

The gender balance was close to that of the general population and there were no significant differences across the projects.

As shown in Figure 1, while the ethnicity profile was similar to the population estimate for England and Wales, clients from ethnic minorities were more likely to be Black/Black British and less likely to be Asian than the general population. There were however striking differences by project in terms of ethnicity, reflecting the profile of the areas in which the projects were based. Capitalise had the greatest proportion of clients from an ethnic minority (67%), particularly Black/Black British (36%). West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside were significantly more likely to have Asian clients (9% and 8% respectively). In contrast, projects such as CAB Rural, North East and Wales had the lowest proportion of clients from ethnic minorities (1%, 5% and 8% respectively).

Clients tended to be older than the general population: 30% of clients were aged under 41 years old (vs. 40% of the general population), and just 13% were aged under 31 (vs. 23% of the general population).

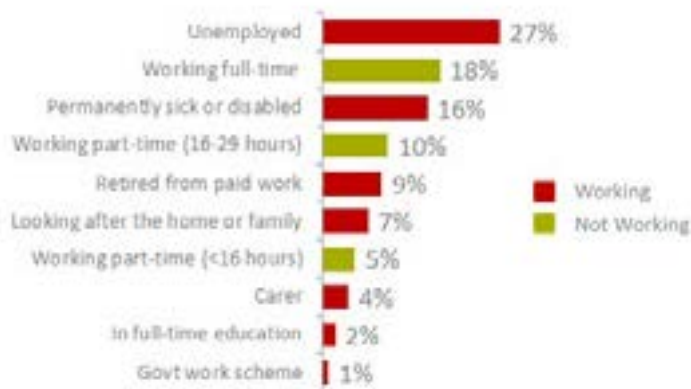
Half of the interviewees were social tenants (compared with 15% in the general population) reflecting the employment profile of the group (see next section). 19% of clients owned their home either outright or with a mortgage compared with a significantly higher amount of the population in England and Wales (66%). CAB Disability and Capitalise clients were the most likely to be living in social housing (67% and 61% respectively).

Interviewees were less likely to be educated to degree level or higher (17% vs. 27% of the general population), with the exception of Capitalise clients (35%). Overall, clients from ethnic minorities were more likely to be in possession of a degree or higher (36% vs. 12% White British).

4.2 Employment status

A considerable difference was observed between the overall population and the sample of clients surveyed in terms of overall employment status. National unemployment rates were 7.1% at the time of this survey, significantly lower than those seen among clients (27%) and, as discussed later in the report, job loss was a common trigger for problematic debt. It should also be kept in mind that this research evaluated mainly face-to-face debt advice which may have been more accessible to those with fewer or no work commitments. It may be that those in employment accessed debt advice through alternative channels.

Figure 2. Employment status – ‘Which of the following best applies to your current situation?’⁷



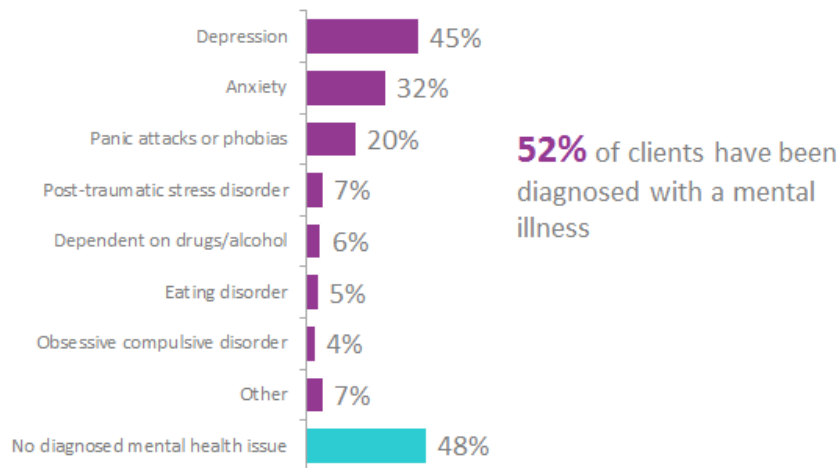
While there was a specific project catering for disabled clients (Disability) the 16% figure of clients who were permanently sick or disabled received advice across all of the projects surveyed.

4.3 Mental health

Half (52%) of the clients interviewed were diagnosed with a mental health condition of some kind. Of these the majority had been diagnosed with depression but many also mentioned other mental health issues. Just a third of those who had been diagnosed reported only one condition from the list below with the remainder reporting more than one. This is important for context when considering the responses of clients in the research, and also for debt advisers to bear in mind within the advice centres themselves.

⁷ Q44. Which of these descriptions best applies to you current situation? Base: All respondents (n=1380)

Figure 3. Diagnosed mental health condition – ‘Have you been diagnosed with any of the following conditions?’⁸



The only significant difference by project in terms of the incidence of mental health issues was that it was more prevalent in the CAB Disability project, where overall 73% of clients had been diagnosed with a mental health condition of some kind.

Those who lived alone were more likely to have been diagnosed with a mental health issue (60%) as were those of White British ethnicity (54% vs. 44% BME). There was a trend towards older clients being more likely to have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.

“I wouldn’t have been able to do anything without seeking advice. I was getting so depressed and it took it off my mind. My son advised me to do this as he had used the service before, and we are both a lot better. It took the stress off.”

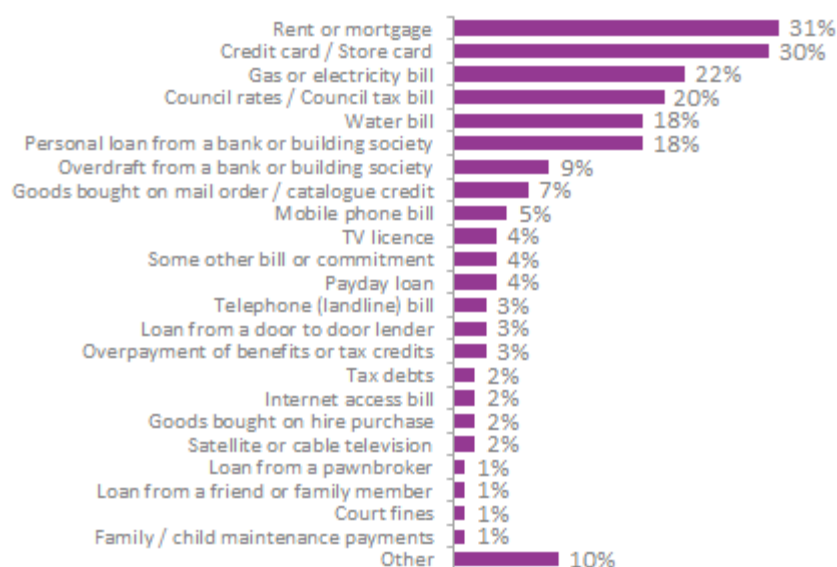
⁸ Q43. Have you been diagnosed with any of the following conditions? Base: all respondents (n=1380)

5 Reasons clients seek advice

5.1 Debt situations prior to seeking advice

Around half (52%) of clients had multiple types of bills or payments that they were concerned about, and these frequently included a 'priority' bill. Rent or mortgage arrears were the most common (31%), followed by credit cards (30%). We know from the 2012 research that credit cards are sometimes used to service household bills and as such may be a pre-cursor to incurring priority debts.

Figure 4. Debt situation – Which household bills or payments were you concerned about when you decided to seek advice or information?⁹



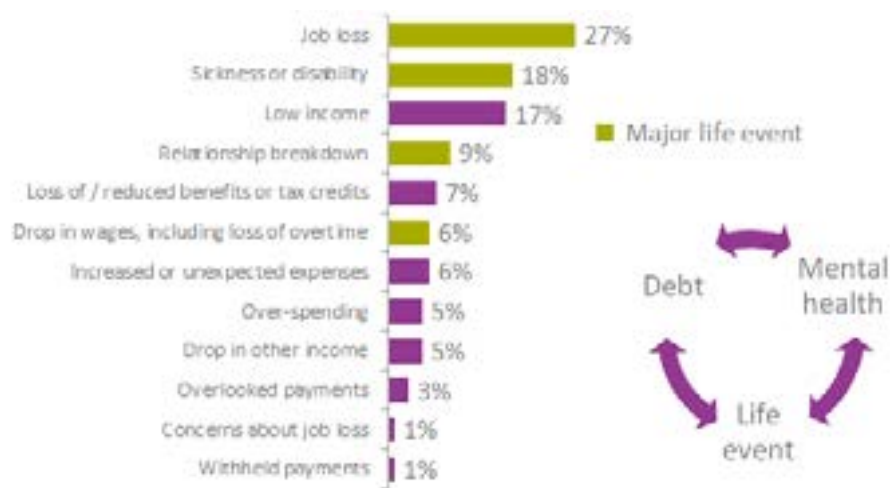
⁹ Q1. Which household bills or payments were you concerned about when you decided to seek advice or information from [PROJECT NAME]? Base: All respondents (n=1380)

5.2 Reasons for debt

For many clients the trigger for unmanageable debt was a major life event that reduced their income and/or increased required expenditure. Job loss and sickness/disability were the two most common reasons mentioned by clients. Relationship breakdown was the other life event commonly triggering debt problems.

The relationship between major life events, debt problems and mental health issues is complex; with any one potentially triggering the other. Once established, it appears to be a cycle that can be difficult to break.

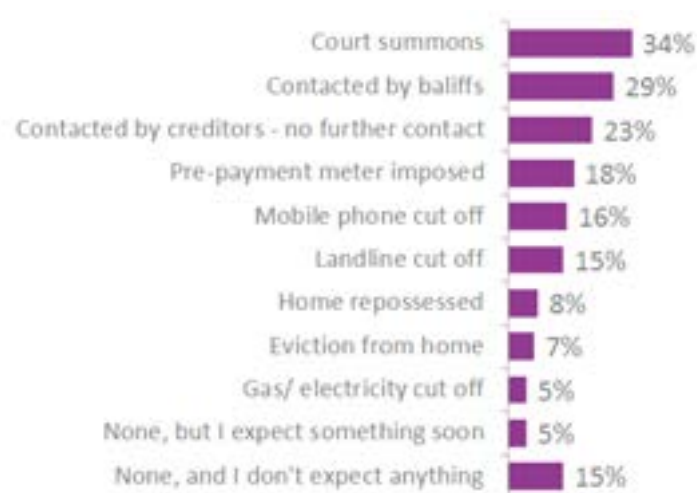
Figure 5. Thinking now about you and your household, what were the main reasons for your debt or arrears?¹⁰



¹⁰ Q2. Thinking now about you and your household, what were the main reasons for your debt or arrears? Base: all responding (n=1380) Mind 2011 - Still in the red, update on debt and mental health; <http://www.mind.org.uk/media/273468/still-in-the-red.pdf> Mind 2012 – Understanding depression; http://www.mind.org.uk/media/42904/understanding_depression_2012.pdf

While the initial cause of debt may already have been in evidence for some time, specific triggers such as a court summons or contact from bailiffs were the most common prompts for clients to seek advice (34% and 29% respectively). Around half of clients (49%) had sought advice before the situation escalated to this point – either before creditors made contact (20%) or before creditors took further action (29%).

Figure 6. Thinking now about the most recent occasion when you sought advice or information, had you experienced any of the following actions beforehand?¹¹



A relatively small proportion of clients did not take action until serious consequences arose. Examples of these were eviction (7%) and home repossession (8%).

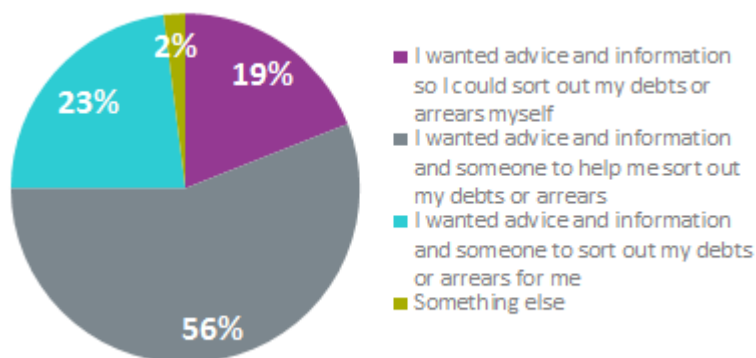
Those with mental health conditions were significantly more likely to have experienced some of the consequences of debt problems; most notably a court summons (39% vs. 29% of those without a diagnosed mental health condition), having a pre-payment meter imposed (22% vs. 14%), having a telephone landline cut off (18% vs. 11%) or having a mobile phone service cut off (18% vs. 13%).

¹¹ Q8. Thinking now about the most recent occasion when you sought advice or information, had you experienced any of the following actions beforehand? Base: all responding (n=1380)

6 Advice provided

6.1 Level of control desired by client

Figure 7. When you decided to seek advice or information, which of the following best described your situation¹²



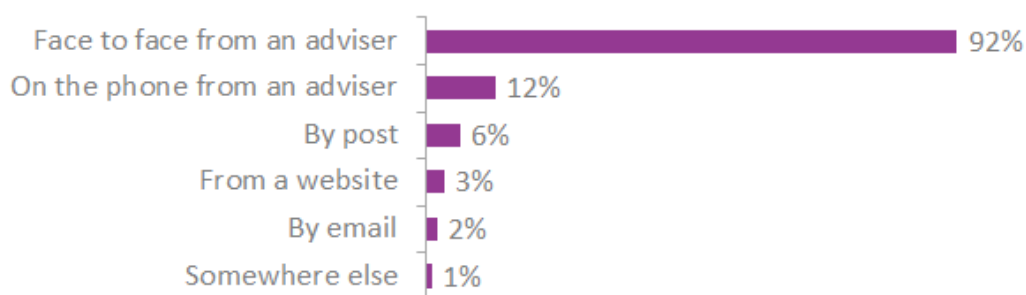
The majority of clients (75%) wanted help from the adviser so they could either fully manage the debt themselves (19%), or at least maintain some personal control and responsibility over the situation (56%). However, a significant minority (23%) expected the adviser to take action on their behalf. Clients without formal educational qualifications and those with a lower understanding of the next steps were significantly more likely to expect a greater level of adviser intervention (33% and 36% respectively wanted the adviser to act for them).

¹² Q3 When you decided to seek advice or information, which of the following best described your situation? Base: all responding (n=1380)

6.2 How advice was received

Almost all clients recalled receiving advice face to face from an adviser, but in a minority of cases (12%) this was supplemented with an additional means of contact – most commonly phone. It is unclear whether the alternative contact took place before or after the face to face session.

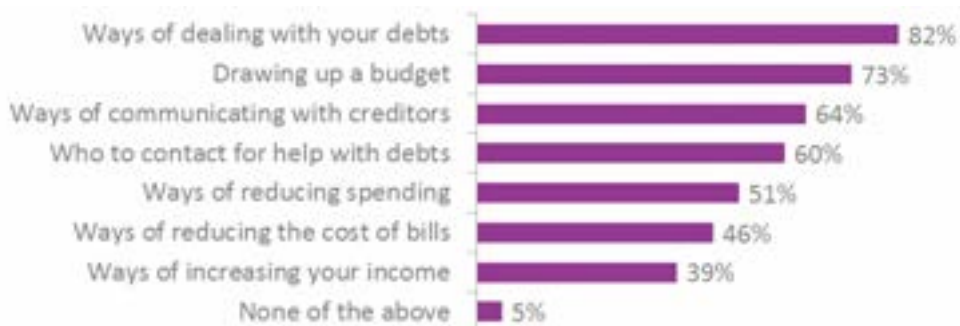
Figure 8. Which of the following statements best describes how you received your advice or information?¹³



6.3 Areas covered during advice

The advice mostly focused on dealing with debts (82%); drawing up a budget of income and expenditure was the most common feature (73%). Two-thirds of clients discussed ways of communicating with creditors (64%), and a slightly smaller number discussed who to contact for help (60%). Ways of reducing spending (51%), reducing bills (46%) or increasing income (39%) were not as universally covered.

Figure 9. Did you get advice or information about any of the following topics?¹⁴



The under-25s were significantly more likely than any other age group to receive information about who to contact for help with their debts (76% compared to the average of 60%).

¹³ Q4. Which of the following statements best describes how you received your advice or information from [PROJECT NAME]? Question allowed multiple answers Base: all responding (n=1380)

¹⁴ Q5. Did you get advice or information about any of the following topics? Base: all responding (n=1380)

The CAB East of England and Wales projects tended to cover more areas with particular reference to increasing income (55% and 50% respectively compared to an average of 39%). Within the East of England project, 81% of clients also received information about how to communicate with creditors compared to an average of 64%.

“They did what I asked them to. They actually did better than I asked them to. I asked them to help me set up a plan for repaying but they actually told me I was able to have these debts written off.”

7 Actions following advice

7.1 Actions considered and agreed

From the options discussed, clients typically decided those they wished to progress and agreed an action plan designed to address their debt situation. In 94% of cases, clients agreed at least one action with an adviser and on average clients agreed three (average, 3.4).

Figure 10. As part of the advice you received, did you consider/agree to any of the following courses of action with your adviser?¹⁵

Course of Action:	% of All Clients – actions considered	% of All Clients – actions agreed
Making reduced payments to creditors	88%	61%
Setting up a Debt Management Plan	53%	37%
Agreeing a period of time with no payments	39%	27%
Debt Relief Order (DRO)	38%	24%
Having your debts written off	36%	22%
Individual Voluntary Agreement (IVA)	35%	22%
Bankruptcy	26%	13%
Full and final settlement of debts	23%	14%
Other	5%	2%
NET: At least one course of action	96%	94%

By far the most commonly-discussed option was making reduced payments, with almost nine in ten clients having considered this option (88%), while around half considered setting up a Debt Management Plan (53%). The other options were much less frequently discussed.

Although setting up a Debt Management Plan was not the most commonly-discussed action, it was the one to which the greatest proportion of clients agreed, with seven in ten clients

¹⁵ Q11a. As part of the advice you received, did you agree to any of the following courses of action with your adviser? Base: all responding (n=1380)

Q12. And have you considered or discussed any other options, apart from the ones that you have already taken up and started? Base: all responding (n=1380)

who considered this option choosing to go ahead with it (70%). A similar proportion also agreed to progress reduced payments or a payment break (69% respectively).

Individual Voluntary Agreements also had a relatively high acceptance rate among those who discussed it as an option with their adviser (63% of those who considered it agreed to progress it).

A number of other less formal actions can also be part of the discussion, such as setting up a household budget or a savings plan.

7.2 Actions progressed

Of those who agreed an action plan with an adviser, more than nine in ten (93%) progressed at least one action within three to six months; this figure was higher than in the previous research (90% in 2012). Of the specific actions agreed, around eight in ten reduced payments (80%), set up a repayment plan (80%), or set up a budget (81%). The least likely to have been progressed was, as might be expected, also one of the most challenging: bankruptcy (54% of those who agreed this course of action had progressed it).

Figure 11. Specific actions agreed and then carried out¹⁶

Action	% agreeing action	% of those agreeing that had progressed at time of interview
Setting up a household budget	32%	81%
Making reduced payments	61%	80%
Setting up a repayment plan	45%	80%
DRO	24%	75%
IVA	22%	68%
Agreeing a period without payments	27%	67%
Benefit or credit options	18%	67%
Setting up a savings plan	9%	67%
Setting up a Debt Management Plan	37%	62%
Debts written off	22%	59%
Consolidating debts	14%	57%
Full and final settlement of debts	14%	57%
Bankruptcy	13%	54%

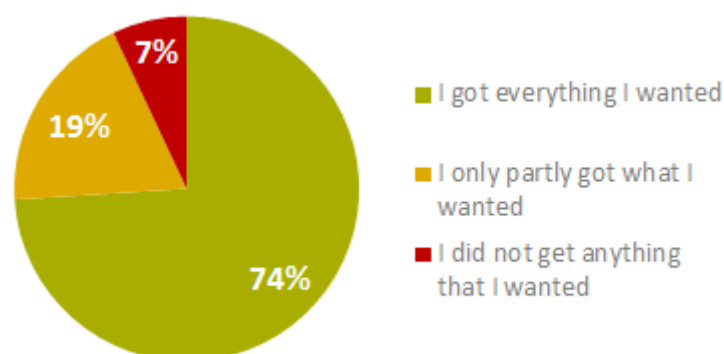
¹⁶ Q11a. As part of the advice you received, did you agree to any of the following courses of action with your adviser? Base: all responding (n=1380)

Q11b. And which of these actions have you done so far? Base: All who agreed an action (n=1297)

7.3 Satisfaction and referrals

Following advice, three-quarters of clients felt they had got everything that they wanted out of the advice they received. Just 7% of clients were left feeling that they hadn't got anything they wanted.

Figure 12. Satisfaction vs. expectations¹⁷



Those who didn't agree an action with advisers were significantly more likely to have felt that their expectations had not been met (37% vs. 5% for those who agreed an action).

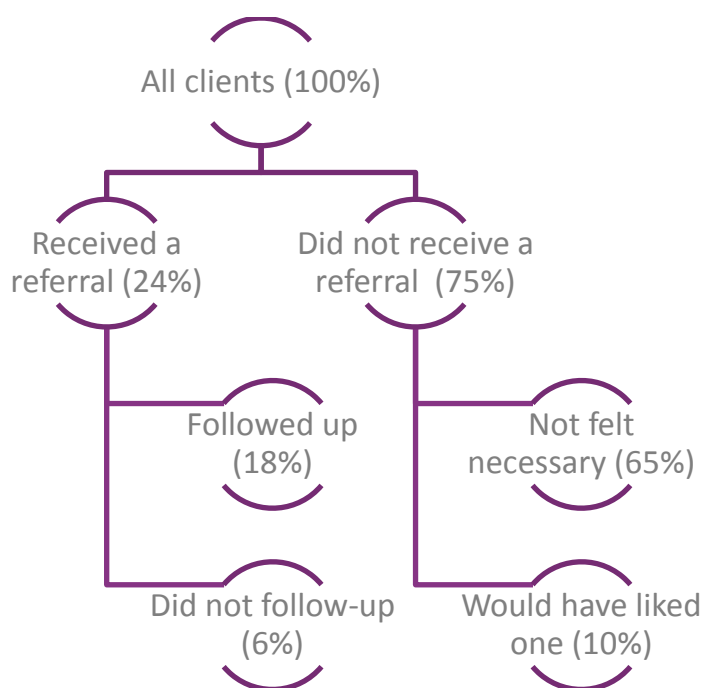
Those with higher levels of education were not as satisfied (67% with degree level education felt they had got everything vs. 79% for those with lower levels of education), perhaps signalling higher expectations from this group. Clients from ethnic minorities also had lower levels of satisfaction (64% got everything they want vs. 77% for white British), which may reflect their higher levels of education.

"I'm very pleased that I sought advice. This sounds very strong but I do believe they kind of saved my life. They didn't save my marriage, which came hand-in-hand with the debts, but I do think they saved my life, because I was on the edge when I contacted them."

¹⁷ Q7. Thinking about the advice or information you have received from [TEXT SUB PROJECT] to date, did you get everything that you wanted, or not? Base: all responding (n=1380)

Nine in ten clients were satisfied with the referral process. Around a quarter of clients received a referral to another organisation for information or advice, (24%), and three-quarters of these followed it up (18%).

Figure 13. The referral process¹⁸



The vast majority of non-referrals were satisfied, however one in ten clients would have liked a referral but did not get one (10%).

Over a third (37%) of those who didn't feel that the advice had met their expectations wanted a referral and didn't get one. One in five (22%) clients who were not able to agree an action fell into this group.

Clients of the CAB Disability project were most likely to want a referral but not get one (24%) and BME clients were also more likely to have felt this way than white British clients (15% vs. 9%).

Reasons for not following up on referrals were not captured as part of this research, and as such would be an interesting area to explore for future studies.

¹⁸ Q14. Were you referred to another organisation for advice or information in relation to your debts or arrears? Base: all responding (n=1380)

8 Knowledge and Understanding

8.1 General understanding

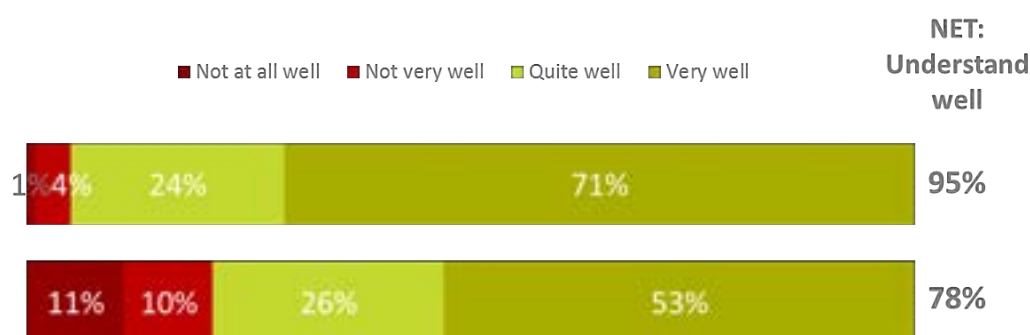
Most clients (93%) understood the next steps required following advice. Those that did not agree an action were significantly more likely to have not understood next steps (30% vs. 6%). Without an agreed path of action these clients may not have been left with a clear understanding of what to do next.

Figure 14. As a result of the advice or information you received, how well did you understand the steps you needed to take to sort out your debts or arrears?¹⁹



It is perhaps understandable that if an action cannot be agreed comprehension of next steps may be low. However, a similar trend of lower understanding was also seen in those who had agreed an action but had not progressed it.

Figure 15. Understanding split by whether agreed actions were carried out²⁰



This lower level of understanding may indicate an area for advisers to focus on to ensure the most positive outcomes for the greatest number of clients once they leave the advice centre.

¹⁹ Q6. As a result of the advice or information you received, how well did you understand the steps you needed to take to sort out your debts or arrears? Base: all responding (n=1380)

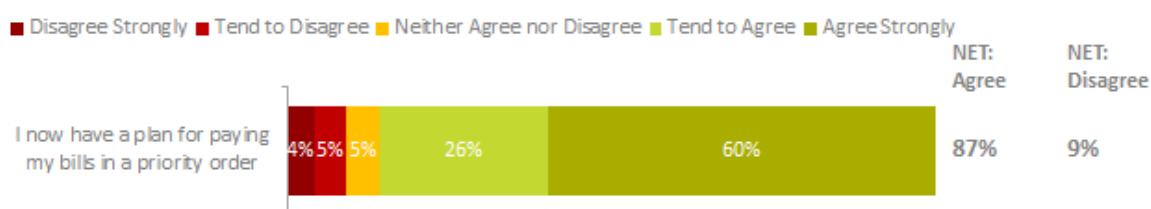
²⁰ Q6. As a result of the advice or information you received, how well did you understand the steps you needed to take to sort out your debts or arrears? Base: all who carried out an action (n=1208), all who agreed but did not carry out an action (n=89)

8.2 Understanding of specific areas

8.2.1 Most important bills to pay on time

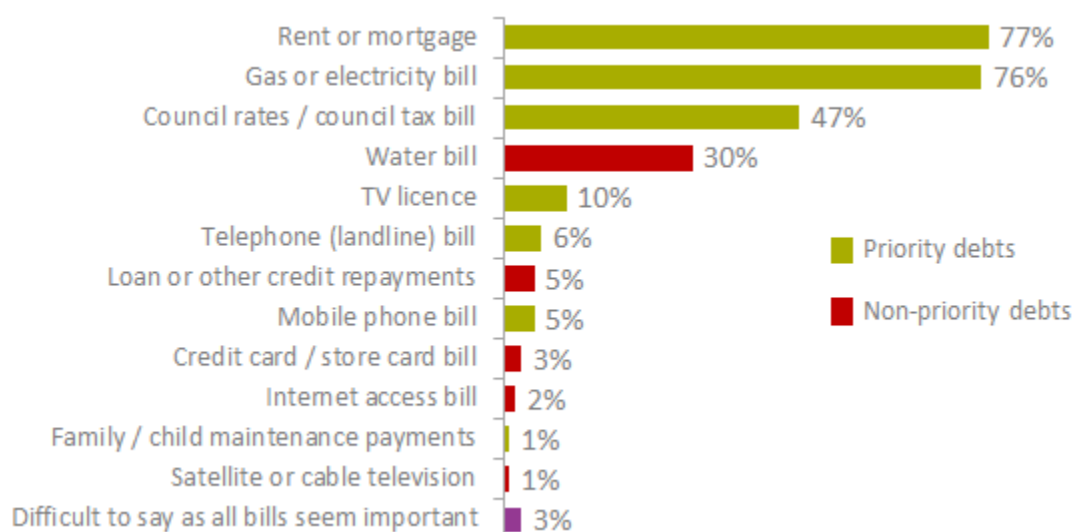
The majority (87%) of clients felt that they had a priority order in which to pay their bills following advice.

Figure 16. To what extent do you agree with the following statement – I now have a plan for paying my bills in a priority order²¹



The priority order applied by most clients tended to overlap with priority debts and in order of likely value, which was encouraging. Water bills were the notable exception. Three in ten clients included water bills in the top three most important bills to pay (although for some social tenants this could be a function of water bills being linked to their rent statements and therefore a priority).

Figure 17. Which three bills do you think it is most important to pay on time, even if you do not have to pay this bill yourself?²²



²¹ Q27_3. To what extent do you agree with the following statement – I now have a plan for paying my bills in a priority order. Base: all excluding 'does not apply' (n=1349)

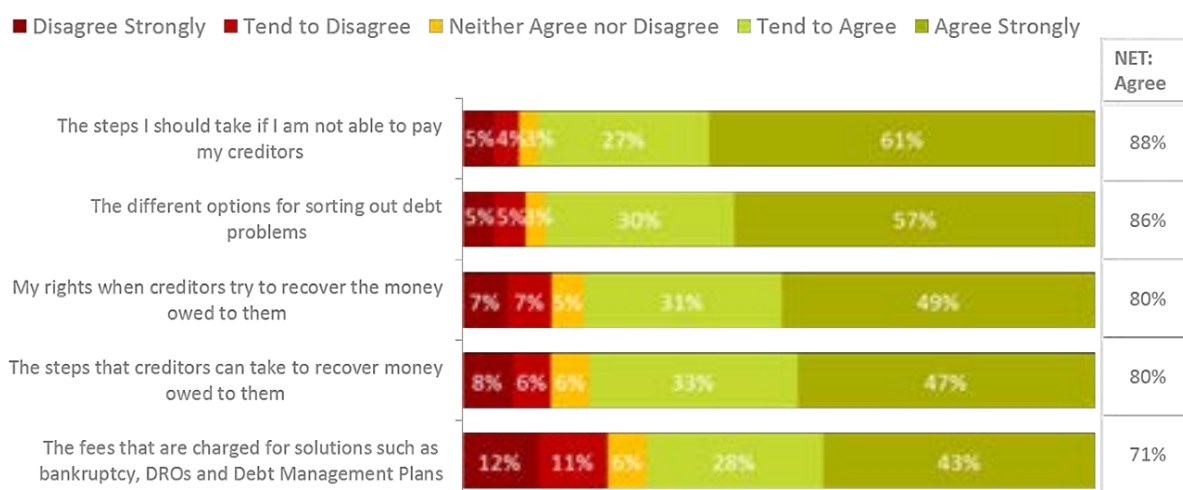
²² Q20. Which three bills do you think it is most important to pay on time, even if you do not have to pay this bill yourself? Base: all responding (n=1380)

Social tenants were particularly likely to have viewed water bills in this way, with 60% ranking water bills in their top three most important bills. This could be because some other household bills (such as rent or council tax) may be reduced for those on low incomes, making water bills among the highest bills received. However, there is potentially a need for greater clarity around what constitutes a priority bill.

8.2.2 Improved knowledge statements

There were a number of areas where more specific knowledge and understanding was required following the advice. For example, in the case of a court summons or contact from bailiffs, some clients did not appreciate either their own rights or the rights of their creditors. Across all measures the majority of clients agreed that their understanding was better after the advice. In particular, understanding of next steps if clients could not pay creditors (88% agreement) and understanding of their options for dealing with debt (86%) were high.

Figure 18. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?²³



²³ To what extent do you agree with the following;

Q25_1 I now know more about the different options for sorting out debt problems. Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1362)

Q25_2 I now know more about the fees that are charged for debt solutions such as bankruptcy, Debt Relief Orders, and Debt Management Plans. Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1305)

Q25_3 I now know more about the steps I should take if I am not able to pay my creditors. Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1364)

Q25_4 I now know more about my rights when creditors try to recover the money owed to them. Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1357)

Q25_5 I now know more about the steps that creditors can take to recover money owed to them. Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1344)

Agreement was lowest for understanding of more complex procedures such as bankruptcy (71%). However, this option was not relevant to all clients and therefore not necessarily discussed during every advice session.

Across all statements, those from ethnic minorities had significantly lower levels of agreement than those of white British clients. Agreement was similarly lower for those that didn't agree or progress actions.

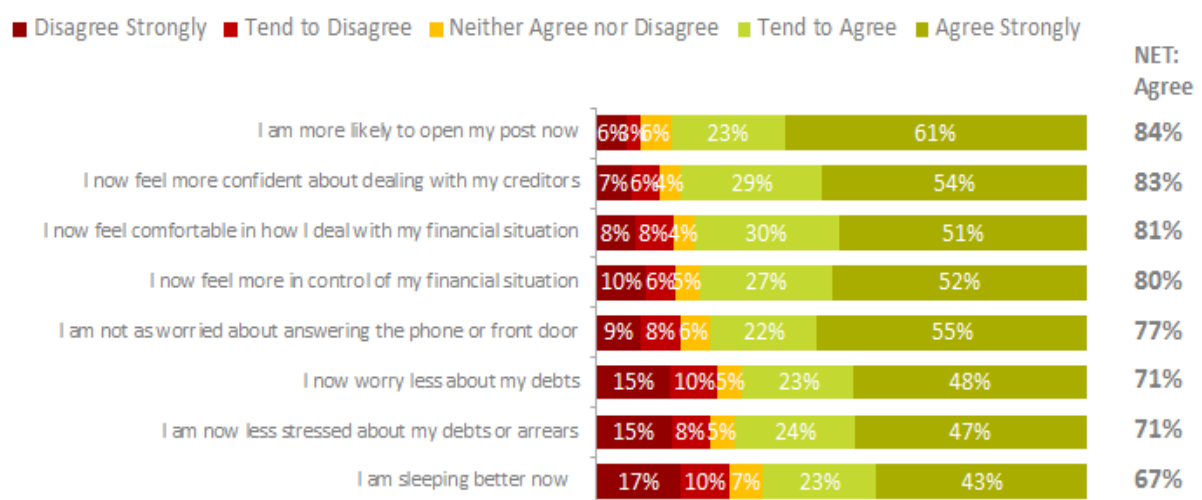
9 Emotional wellbeing

9.1 Wellbeing statements

Following advice, most clients experienced a significant improvement in their emotional wellbeing. At least eight in ten agreed that they were more likely to open their post (84%), felt more confident with creditors (83%), more comfortable with their financial situation (81%) and more in control (80%). While agreement with being less worried, less stressed or sleeping better was slightly lower, on balance these levels were very positive (71%, 71% and 67% respectively).

“The service I received was fantastic. I am in a much better position and feeling a lot better with less stress.”

Figure 19. Wellbeing attitude agreement statements²⁴



Across all statements, agreement tended to be lower among those who did not agree or progress actions, and those who did not understand the next steps needed.

²⁴ To what extent do you agree with the following;

Q25_6. I now feel more confident about dealing with my creditors Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1347)

Q26_1. I now feel more in control of my financial situation. Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1370)

Q26_2. I am more likely to open my post now. Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1326)

Q28_1. I now worry less about my debts. Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1358)

Q28_2. I am sleeping better now. Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1324)

Q28_3. I am not as worried about answering the phone or the front door. Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1323)

Q28_4. I no longer have companies pursuing or chasing me. Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1362)

Q28_5. I am now less stressed about my debts or arrears. Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1362)

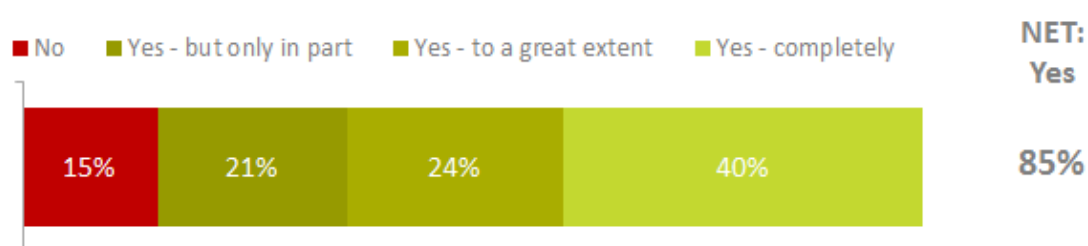
Q28_6. I now feel comfortable in how I go about dealing with my financial situation. Base: all responding excluding 'Does not apply' (n=1362)

10 Debt situation

10.1 Resolution of issues

As previously discussed, for most clients there was at least one (and typically more than one) trigger that led to their seeking advice, be it a court summons, being contacted by bailiffs or more severe situations such as facing eviction or home repossession. In most cases (85%), the advice or information received did at least in part resolve these immediate problems.

Figure 20. Did advice resolve the issues that caused you to seek help?²⁵



Capitalise (London) clients were less likely than clients of other projects to agree that their issues had been *completely* resolved (24% saying yes completely), but overall they were no more likely to say that their issues had not been resolved at all.

Those who were facing more severe debt consequences, such as having their energy cut off or facing eviction/home repossession, were significantly less likely to agree that the advice had resolved their issue (26% and 23% saying no respectively).

Those who had not agreed or progressed actions were far less likely to agree that their issue was resolved (50% said no).

Clients from ethnic minorities were also more likely to feel they had not had their issues resolved (21% vs. 14%).

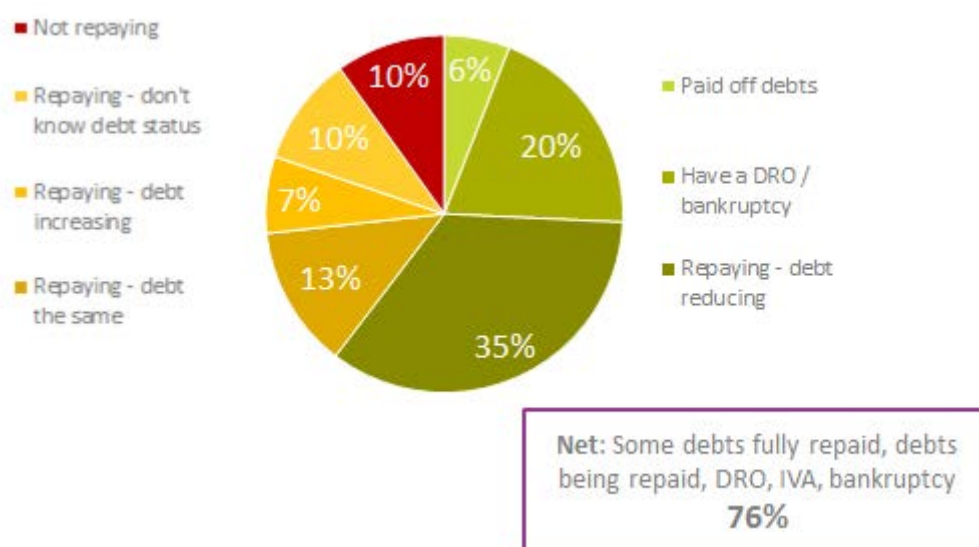
²⁵ Q9. Did the advice or information you received resolve this? Base: All respondents (n=1380)

10.2 Debt resolution

Three to six months after the advice, a quarter (26%) of clients had fully serviced their debts; either paid off in full (6%) or had them cleared through DRO/bankruptcy (20%). A further 35% were managing to reduce their debt through repayments meaning 61% had already made inroads into their overall debt situation.

Of the remaining two-fifths (39%) most were making payments (30%) but not at a level that was sufficient to reduce their overall debts, while some (7%) believed their debt levels to be increasing. One in ten clients was not making repayments and had not cleared their debts.

Figure 21. Repayment status²⁶



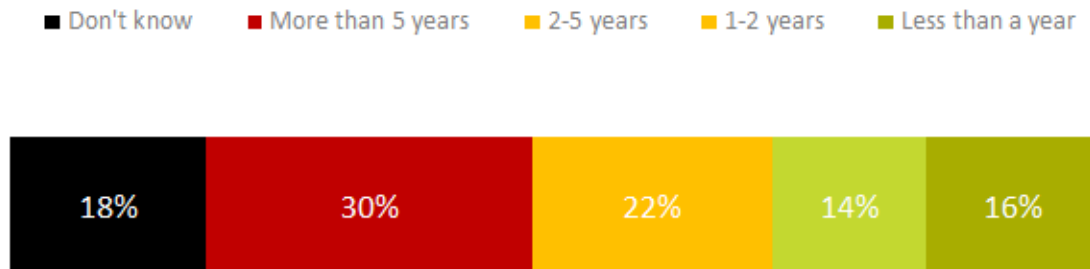
Capitalise clients were most likely to be repaying their debts (78%), while clients that had not progressed any actions were significantly less likely to be doing so (47%).

Given that clients frequently had multiple debts, some (15%) had managed to clear at least some of these even if their overall debt level was not reducing. Combining this with the 61% who had reduced or cleared their overall debts, three-quarters (76%) of clients had reduced or cleared at least some of their debts since the advice session.

²⁶ Q29. Which one of the following statements best describes your situation at the moment? Base: all responding (n=1380)
Q15 [For box-out]. As a result of the advice or information you got, have any of the following things happened? Base: All responding (n=1380)

One in six clients repaying debts – excluding those who had had debts cleared through a DRO or bankruptcy – expected to have their debt situation resolved within a year. For almost half it was either unclear how long the situation would take to resolve (18%), or it was expected to persist for more than 5 years (30%).

Figure 22. Time left to repay debts²⁷



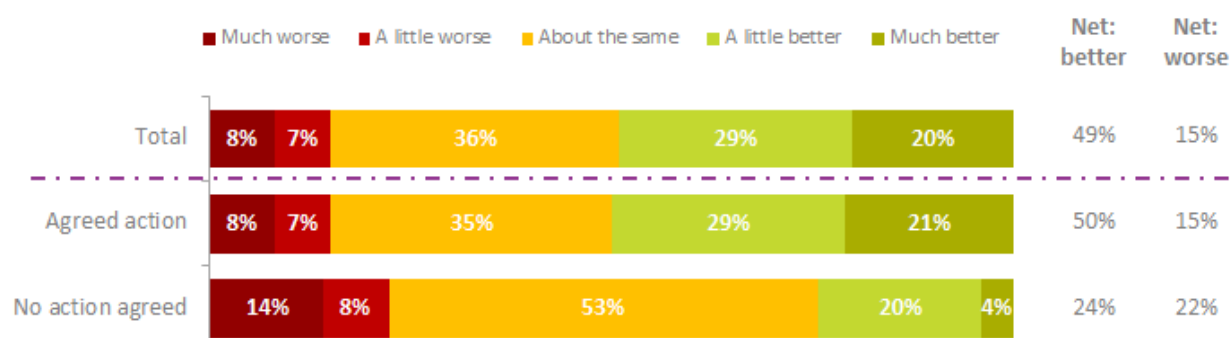
²⁷ Q34. How many months or years do you think it will be until you have repaid the money that you owe? Base: all repaying debts (n=1076)

11 Financial situation

11.1 Overall finances

Following the advice, half (49%) of clients felt that their overall financial situation had improved. In contrast, just 15% had seen their financial situation deteriorate.

Figure 23. Overall financial situation following advice²⁸



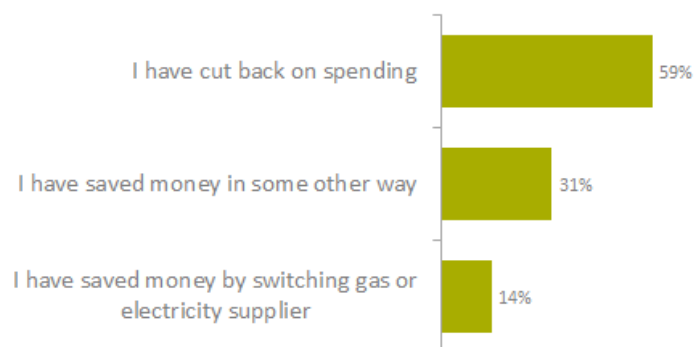
Those who had not agreed an action were significantly less likely to feel their financial situation had improved. Looking at this group, the bulk of clients had not seen their financial situation change, with broadly the same proportion seeing either an improvement or deterioration.

²⁸ Q22. Thinking about your overall financial situation now, is it better, worse or about the same as when you first sought advice or information? Base: All respondents (n=1380)

11.2 Expenditure

Cutting back on spending was a key part of managing a debt situation, with 59% of clients achieving this following the advice. Switching energy supplier was not as likely an outcome (14%), potentially because depending on the individual situation this may not have been an option.

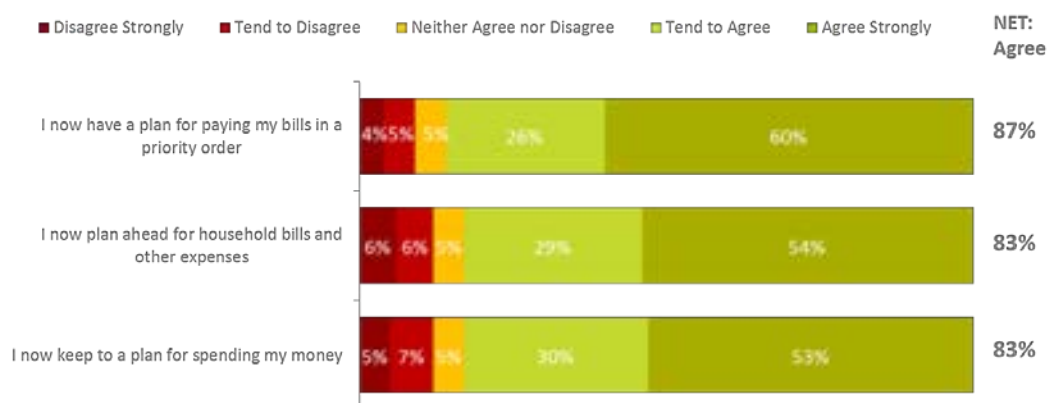
Figure 24. Actions following advice - spending²⁹



In the CAB Rural project 70% of clients had cut back on spending, while 27% of GMMAP clients had successfully saved money by switching gas or electricity supplier.

Looking at the longer term impact of debt advice, planning future expenditure was an area where most clients (at least eight in ten) agreed that they now had a method in place.

Figure 25. Planning around spending and bills³⁰



²⁹ Q15. As a result of the advice or information you got, have any of the following things happened? Base: All respondents (n=1380)

³⁰ To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Q27_1. I now keep to a plan for spending my money. Base: all responding excluding 'Doesn't apply to me' (n=1353)

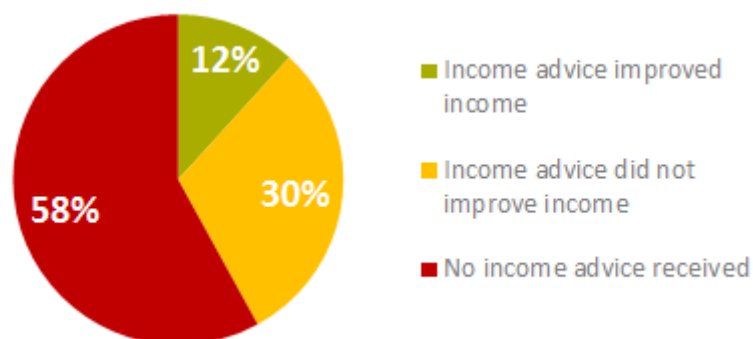
Q27_2. I now plan ahead for household bills and other expenses. Base: all responding excluding 'Doesn't apply to me' (n=1351)

Q27_3. I now have a plan for paying my bills in a priority order. Base: all responding excluding 'Doesn't apply to me' (n=1349)

11.3 Income

Following the advice, 42% of clients recalled receiving information on how to increase their income levels. Only 12% of clients in total had seen their income improve.

Figure 26. Income advice received, and its effects³¹

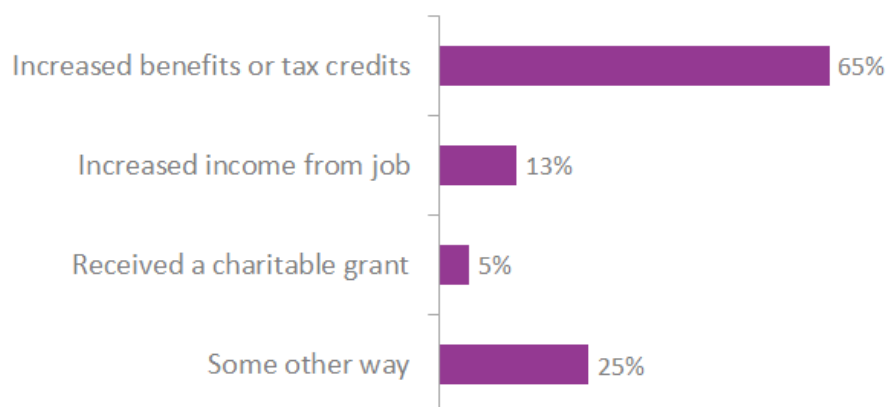


Recall of this type of advice was higher within the CAB Rural project with 52% of clients having some recollection of receiving income advice.

Women were more likely to receive advice on income than men (47% vs. 37%).

Where income had improved, this was most typically a result of securing higher levels of state benefits or tax credits.

Figure 27. Ways in which income improved³²



³¹ Q31. Did the information or advice you received explain how to increase your income from wages, benefits, tax credits or any other source? Base: all responding (n=1380)

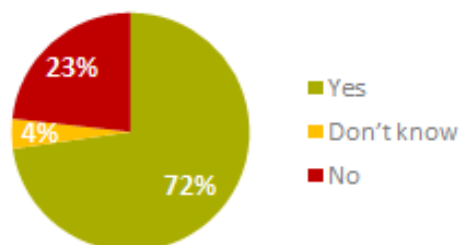
Q32. And did your income from any source increase as a result of the information or advice you received? Base: all who received information about increasing income (n=586)

³² Q33. In what ways did your income increase or your financial situation improve? Base: all whose income improved (n=165)

11.4 Longer-term financial developments

While most clients saw some progress following the advice, external factors can cause situations to change after actions have been agreed. Almost three-quarters (72%) recalled being given information on what to do in that case.

Figure 28. Information received on what to do when situations change³³



Some clients had adjusted the level of repayments they were making. Nearly one in five (19%) of those repaying debts had asked to reduce the regular amount they were paying,³⁴ while 7% had increased their payments.

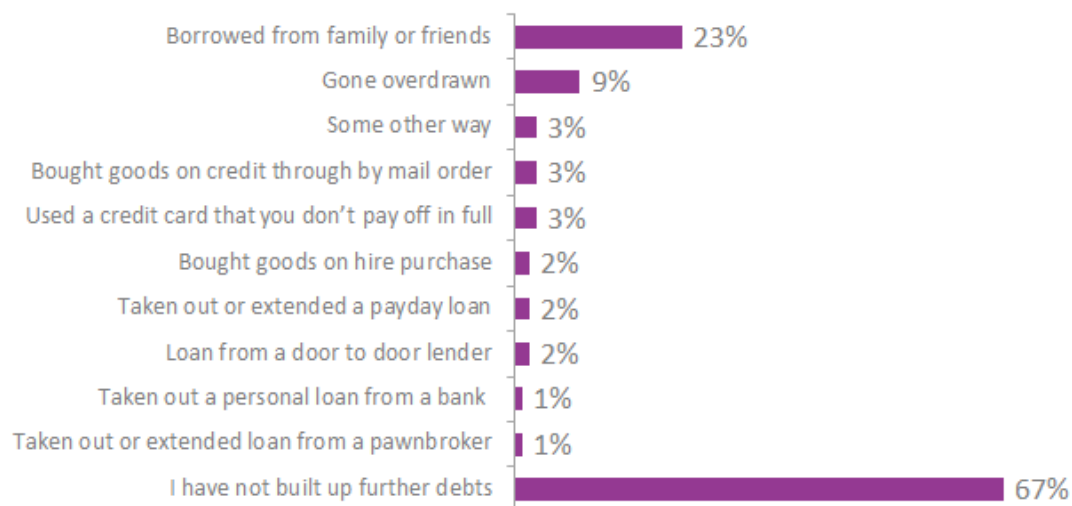
³³ Q13. Did the advice or information you received tell you what you should do if your circumstances changed either for the better or worse? Base: All respondents (n=1380).

³⁴ Q30. Since you started repaying the money that you owe, have you asked to increase or decrease the amount that you pay? Base: All repaying debts (n=1244)

11.5 Further debts following advice

Following the advice, two-thirds of clients did not go on to build any additional debts. Where they did, these debts were most commonly due to borrowing from friends or family (23%) or overdrafts (9%).

Figure 29. Debts accrued following advice³⁵



Those who had not progressed an action were more likely to have incurred further debts (42% vs. 33%). That said, among this group borrowing from friends or family was still the most common (24%).

Clients from ethnic minorities were more likely to have incurred additional debt (40% vs. 31% for white British clients).

Clients with mental health conditions were similarly likely to have found themselves building up further debt (39% vs. 26% for those without diagnosed mental health issues).

³⁵ Q23. Since you got advice or information, have you built up further debts in any of the following ways? Base: all respondents (n=1380)

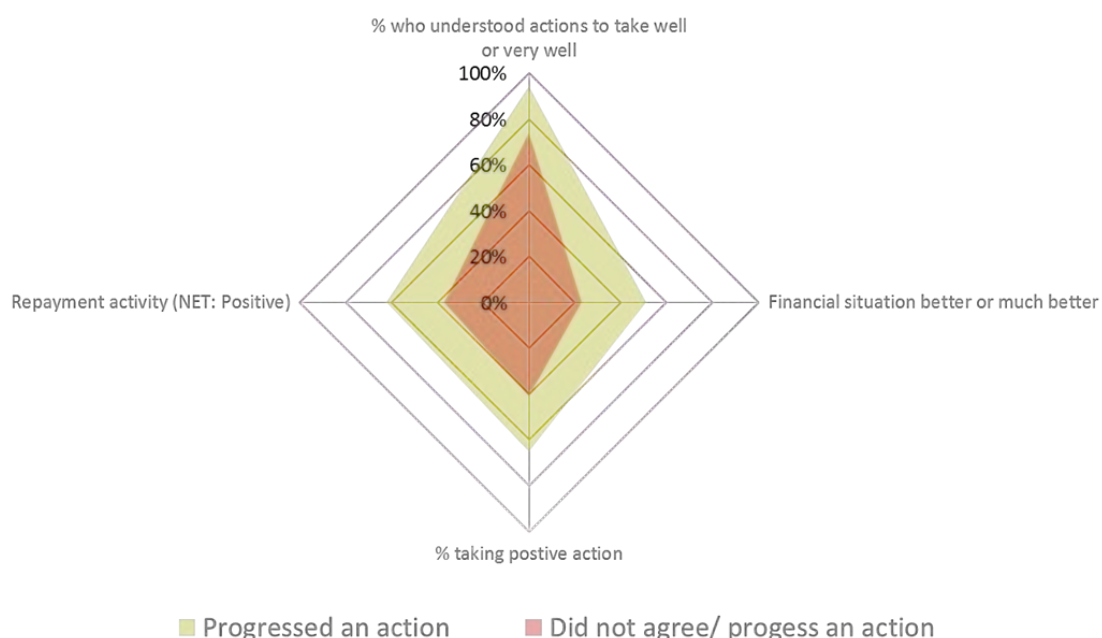
12 Identifying poorer outcomes

Those with the least beneficial outcomes were those who had not agreed or progressed any recommended actions following the advice session (12% of clients). These fall equally into one of two categories:

- Those that did not agree any actions with the adviser (6%)
- Those that agreed actions but did not progress them (6%)

There may be some clients who did not agree or progress a recommended action because of a favourable change in circumstances after the session. On the whole however this group of clients had significantly worse outcomes on a number of measures.

Figure 30. Comparative outcomes of those not agreeing or progressing an action



On average clients who progressed an action reported being in a significantly better financial position after receiving advice than those who did not agree or progress an action. In addition, this group were significantly more likely to understand the actions they needed to take. It may be that the approach to these two groups was different. The first can be identified within a session, while the second group requires some follow-up action.

12.1 The role of understanding in taking actions

Another key factor in predicting poor outcomes is how well a client understands their next steps. Although just 7% of clients did not understand (either not well or not at all well), two-fifths (42%) of these did not go on to agree or progress an action. While this may have been an excuse for some, it appears to be an important element in identifying whether clients may have problems servicing their debt after receiving advice.

Understanding was not influenced by the nature or number of actions which clients had to take. On average those with lower understanding of what they needed to do next had agreed fewer actions than those who did not (2.4 actions vs. 3.6).

Significantly more clients who did not understand what they had to do next were facing more severe consequences such as eviction or having an energy supply cut off. These more severe triggers can typically only be reached if earlier communications from creditors are not dealt with; this potentially indicates that the clients were in denial about or did not understand the severity of their financial situation.

A greater proportion of those who didn't understand the next steps they should take were from ethnic minorities (12% vs. 6% for white British clients). Those with diagnosed mental health conditions were also less likely to understand what they had to do next (10% vs. 4%). If an assessment of a client's understanding of next steps can be made at the session, it may be that additional follow-up meetings or calls to monitor progress should be identified as necessary to support these groups.

13 Appendix A – Detailed methodology breakdown

13.1 Telephone interviews

This research was conducted by telephone with clients of the projects funded by the Money Advice Service. These interviews were conducted by a trained interviewer at a time suitable for the client. The interviews lasted 21 minutes on average.

13.2 Sampling

Sampling was conducted using client records provided by the individual projects funded by the Money Advice Service. These contacts were clients who had sought advice 3-6 months prior to fieldwork commencing, such that there was sufficient time for the advice to have been acted on, and who had said they were happy to be contacted subsequently for research purposes. Therefore, given the time lag, insights are based on their recollection of the debt advice experience. Contacts were selected at random, with no targeting of clients based on particular details of their case.

Fieldwork ran from 28th November 2013 until 9th January 2014 with calls made between 10am and 9pm, excepting where specific appointments were made with clients who requested to be called earlier or later.

The nature of the debt situations of some clients means that some were not comfortable answering calls from numbers they did not recognise. This was not something that could be accounted for in sampling, beyond ensuring that all calls were made from unshielded numbers where any clients who called back were informed of who had called them and why.

In a change from the 2012 research, the questionnaire in 2013 contained screening criteria to exclude any who had visited projects but were not behind with bills or credit commitments, and who had not taken any action to improve their financial situation. We found that 196 respondents (12%) were screened out of the survey based on these criteria. Due to this difference in sampling, care must be taken when comparing questions from 2013 to their 2012 counterparts. While broad comparisons can be made, differences cannot be significance tested and while we must assume that those who were screened in 2013 would have qualified to complete the survey in 2012, we cannot speculate on the impact this would have on overall scores.

13.2.1 Projects

The Money Advice Service funds 16 projects across England and Wales. These are;

1. Bristol Debt Advice Centre (BDAC – South West, now Talking Money – South West)
2. Capitalise London
3. Community Finance Solutions (CFS)
4. East Midlands Money Advice (EMMA)

5. Greater Merseyside Money Advice Project (GMMAP)
6. Citizens Advice (CAB)
 - a. Disability
 - b. East
 - c. North East
 - d. North West
 - e. Prison & Probation
 - f. Rural
 - g. South East
 - h. South West
 - i. Wales
 - j. West Midlands
 - k. Yorkshire & Humber

In addition, research is being conducted with the projects funded by the Money Advice Service in Scotland and Northern Ireland; the results of this research will be reported separately.

In total, 1,380 interviews took place with clients across the different projects with a breakdown as follows:

Figure 31. Interviews completed

Project name	Interviews completed
BDAC – South West (now Talking Money – South West)	20
Capitalise London	165
Community Finance Solutions (CFS)	18
East Midlands Money Advice (EMMA)	154
Greater Merseyside Money Advice Project (GMMAP)	37
Disability	33
East	42
North East	175
North West	164
Prison & Probation	17
Rural	79
South East	27
South West	34
Wales	118
West Midlands	131
York & Humberside	166

Sample sizes by project were principally determined by the number of client records provided. Throughout this report key significant differences by project are brought out

where relevant. However, it should be noted that significance testing has not been applied for any individual projects with fewer than 30 clients participating in the research.

13.2.2 Note on significant differences and robustness

Where differences have been reported within this report, they are the product of a 2-tailed T test at 95% confidence. The T test compares the actual differences between two means in relation to the variation in the data.

14 Appendix B – quantitative questionnaire

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

This questionnaire asks about information and advice you have received relating to your household bills and payments, and the impact it may have had for you.

It should take you no more than about **15 minutes** to complete. Please answer each question in the order shown.

It is important that you provide honest and thoughtful responses. This helps ensure that the research leads to an improved service for you, and for other consumers.

Please be assured that your responses will be completely anonymous; we will not analyse results on an individual basis.

This survey is being conducted under the terms of the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct. If you have any comments about this questionnaire please contact [insert contact details].

SECTION 1: About your situation and getting information and advice

Which of the following best applies to your situation when you sought advice?

- a) You were behind with bills or credit commitments CONTINUE WITH SURVEY
- b) You were not behind with bills and credit commitments, but you have since taken action to sort out your financial situation CONTINUE WITH SURVEY
- c) You were not behind with bills and credit commitments and you have not yet taken any action to sort out your financial situation THANK YOU, BUT YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE REST OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1. Which household bills or payments were you concerned about when you decided to seek advice or information from [Project Name]?

Please select all that apply

- Rent or mortgage
- Gas or electricity bill
- Telephone (Landline) bill
- Mobile phone bill
- Water bill
- Internet access bill
- Council rates/ Council Tax bill
- TV licence
- Satellite or cable television
- Credit card/ Store card
- Overdraft from a bank or building society
- Personal loan from a bank or building society
- Payday loan
- Loan from a door to door lender
- Loan from a pawnbroker
- Goods bought on hire purchase
- Goods bought on mail order/ catalogue credit
- Loan from a friend or family member
- Overpayment of benefits or tax credits
- Family / Child maintenance payments
- Court fines
- Tax debts
- Some other bill or credit commitment

Q2. Thinking now about you and your household what were the main reasons for your debts or arrears?

Please select all that apply

- Job loss
- Concerns about job loss
- Drop in wages, including loss of overtime
- Loss of / Reduced benefits or tax credits
- Drop in other income
- Low income
- Relationship breakdown
- Sickness or disability
- Over-spending
- Increased or unexpected expenses
- Overlooked payments
- Withheld payments
- Some other reason

Q3. When you decided to seek advice or information, which of the following best described your situation?

Please select one option only

- I wanted advice and information so I could sort out my debts or arrears *myself*
- I wanted advice and information and someone to *help me* sort out my debts or arrears
- I wanted advice and information and someone to sort out my debts or arrears *for me*
- Something else

Q4. Which of the following statements best describes how you received your advice or information from [Project name]?

Please select all that apply

- From a website
- On the phone from an adviser
- Face to face from an adviser
- By email
- By post
- Somewhere else

Q5. Did you get advice or information about any of the following topics?

Please select all that apply

- Ways of dealing with your debts or arrears
- Drawing up a budget of money coming in and payments going out
- Ways of reducing the amount of money you spend
- Ways of reducing the cost of your household bills
- Ways of increasing your income, including from benefits or tax credits
- Who to contact for help with debts or arrears
- Ways of managing communications and dealing with your creditors
- None of the above

Q6. As a result of the advice or information you received, how well did you understand the steps you needed to take to sort out your debts or arrears?

Please one answer only

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not very well
- Not at all well

Q7. Thinking about the advice or information you have received to date from [Project name], did you get everything that you wanted, or not?

Please select one answer only

I got everything that I wanted

I only partly got what I wanted

I did not get anything that I wanted

Q8. Thinking now about the most recent occasion when you sought advice or information, had you experienced any of the following actions beforehand?

Tick all boxes that apply.

Having your landline phone cut off

Having your mobile phone cut off

Being contacted by creditors

A court summons from a creditor

Being contacted by bailiffs

Being evicted from your home

Having your home repossessed

Having your gas or electricity cut off

Having a prepayment meter imposed for gas or electricity

None of these, but I expected at least one to happen soon

None of these, and I did not expect them to happen

Please go to Question 11a if you select "None of these"

Q9. Did the advice or information you received resolve this?

Please select one answer only

Yes - completely

Yes – to a great extent

Yes – but only in part

No

Not relevant

SECTION 2: What actions did you take after receiving advice or information?

Q11a. As part of the advice you received, did you agree to any of the following courses of action with your adviser?

Please select all that apply

- Making reduced payments to the organisations you owed money to
- Agreeing a period of time when you made no payments
- Setting up a Debt Management Plan
- Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA)
- Debt Relief Order (DRO)
- Trust Deed (*Scotland only*)
- Protected Trust Deed (*Scotland only*)
- Debt Arrangement Scheme (*Scotland only*)
- Bankruptcy
- Full and final settlement of debts
- Having your debts written off
- Consolidating your debts
- Setting up a repayment plan
- Setting up a household budget
- Setting up a saving plan
- Obtaining access to benefit or credit options not previously aware of
- None of these
- Other

Q11b. And which of these options have you done so far

Please select all that apply

- Making reduced payments to the organisations you owed money to
- Agreeing a period of time when you made no payments
- Setting up a Debt Management Plan
- Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA)
- Debt Relief Order (DRO)
- Trust Deed (*Scotland only*)
- Protected Trust Deed (*Scotland only*)
- Debt Arrangement Scheme (*Scotland only*)
- Bankruptcy

- Full and final settlement of debts
- Having your debts written off
- Consolidating your debts
- Setting up a repayment plan
- Setting up a household budget
- Setting up a saving plan
- Obtaining access to benefit or credit options not previously aware of
- None of these
- Other

Q12. And have you considered or discussed any other options, apart from the ones that you have already taken up and started?

Please select all that apply

- Making reduced payments to the organisations you owed money to
- Agreeing a period of time when you made no payments
- Setting up a Debt Management Plan
- Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA)
- Debt Relief Order (DRO)
- Trust Deed (*Scotland only*)
- Protected Trust Deed (*Scotland only*)
- Debt Arrangement Scheme (*Scotland only*)
- Bankruptcy
- Full and final settlement of debts
- Having your debts written off
- None of these

Q13. Did the advice or information you received tell you what you should do if your circumstances changed either for the better or worse?

Please select one answer only

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- This doesn't apply to me

Q14. Were you referred to another organisation for advice or information in relation to your debts or arrears?

Please select one answer only

- Yes I was referred and I followed it up
- Yes I was referred, and I tried to contact them but was unable to
- Yes I was referred but I did not follow it up
- No, but I would have liked a referral
- No, I did not need a referral

Q15 As a result of the advice or information you got, have any of the following things happened?

Please select all that apply

- I am paying off my debts or arrears
- Some or all of my debts or arrears have been paid in full
- Some or all of my debts or arrears have been written off
- I have a payment plan/ monthly payment arrangement in place with my creditors
- My income has increased
- I have cut back on spending
- I have saved money by switching gas or electricity supplier
- I have saved money in some other way
- I am in the process of /have declared bankruptcy
- I am in the process of organising/ have a Debt Relief Order (DRO)
- I am in the process of organising/ have an Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA)
- None of these

Q16. As a result of the advice or information you got, which of the following things do you expect to happen in the next 6-12 months?

Please select all that apply

- I will pay off my debts or arrears
- Some or all of my debts or arrears will have been paid in full
- Some or all of my debts or arrears will have been written off
- I will have started paying off my debts or arrears
- I will have declared bankruptcy
- I will have an Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA)
- My income will increase
- I will cut back on spending
- I will have saved money by switching gas or electricity supplier
- I will have saved money in some other way
- None of these

SECTION 3: Your current financial situation.

Q18. Which one of the following statements best describes how well you are keeping up with your bills and credit commitments at the moment, including any debts or arrears that you are paying off?

Please select one option only

I am keeping up with everything without any difficulties

I am keeping up with everything but it is a struggle

I am falling behind with some bills or credit commitments

I am having real problems and falling behind with many bills or commitments

Q19. Since you have started receiving debt advice or information have you ever delayed or missed paying a bill? (By delay I mean not paying the bill until 4 or more weeks after the due date.)

Please select one option only

I often do this

I occasionally do this

I rarely do this

I never do this

Q20. Which three bills do you think it is most important to pay on time, even if you do not have to pay this bill yourself? Please select a MAXIMUM of three items.

Please select up to 3 boxes that apply

- Rent or mortgage
- Gas or electricity bill
- Telephone (Landline) bill
- Mobile phone bill
- Internet access bill
- Water bill
- Council rates/ Council Tax bill
- Credit card/ Store card bill
- Loan or other credit repayments
- TV licence
- Satellite or cable television
- Family / Child maintenance payments
- Some other bill
- Difficult to say as all bills seem important

Q21a. Since you got advice or information, have you fallen further behind with any of the following bills?

Please select all options that apply

- Rent or mortgage
- Gas or electricity bill
- Telephone (Landline) bill
- Internet access bill
- Mobile phone bill
- Water bill
- Council rates/ Council Tax bill
- Credit card/ Store card bill
- Loan or other credit repayments
- TV licence
- Satellite or cable television
- Family / Child maintenance payments
- Some other bill

Q21b. Since you got advice or information, have you fallen further behind with any other bills? *Please select all options that apply*

- Rent or mortgage
- Gas or electricity bill
- Telephone (Landline) bill
- Internet access bill
- Mobile phone bill
- Water bill
- Council rates/ Council Tax bill
- Credit card/ Store card bill
- Loan or other credit repayments
- TV licence
- Satellite or cable television
- Family / Child maintenance payments
- Some other bill

Q22. Thinking about your overall financial situation now, is it better, worse or about the same as when you first sought advice or information?

Please select one option only

- Much better
- A little better
- About the same
- A little worse
- Much worse

Q23. Since you got advice or information, have you built up further debts in any of the following ways?

Please select all options that apply

- Used a credit card or store card that you don't pay off in full
- Gone overdrawn
- Taken out or extended a personal loan from a bank or building society
- Taken out or extended a payday loan
- Loan from a door to door lender
- Taken out or extended loan from a pawnbroker
- Bought goods on hire purchase

Bought goods on credit through a mail order account

Borrowed from family or friends

Some other way

I have not built up further debts

SECTION 4: Your views about the effect of advice or information

This section contains statements that some other people have made about the impact of getting advice or information to help sort out their debts or arrears. For each statement, please indicate whether you agree or disagree that it applies to you.

Q25. As a result of the advice or information I received....

Please select one answer per row

	Agree strongly	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Disagree strongly	This doesn't apply to me
I now know more about the different options for sorting out debt problems						
I now know more about the fees that are charged for debt solutions such as bankruptcy, Debt Relief Orders, and Debt Management Plans						
I now know more about the steps I should take if I am not able to pay my creditors						
I now know more about my rights when creditors try to recover the money owed to them						
I now know more about the steps that creditors can take to recover money owed to them						
I now feel more confident about dealing with my creditors						

Q26. As a result of the advice or information I received.... Please select one answer per row

	Agree strongly	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Disagree strongly	This doesn't apply to me
I now feel more in control of my financial situation						
I am more likely to open my post now						
Money is no longer a source of friction in my life						

Q27. As a result of the advice or information I received... Please select one answer per row

	Agree strongly	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Disagree strongly	I already did this
I now keep to a plan for spending my money						
I now plan ahead for household bills and other expenses						
I now have a plan for paying my bills in a priority order						
I now find it easier to balance my household budget						

Q28. As a result of the advice or information I received.... Please select one answer per row

	Agree strongly	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Disagree strongly	This doesn't apply to me
I now worry less about my debts						
I am sleeping better now						
I am not as worried about answering the phone or the front door						
I no longer have companies pursuing or chasing me						
I am now less stressed about my debts or arrears						
I now feel comfortable in how I go about dealing with my financial situation						

SECTION 5: Repaying your debts

Q29. Which one of the following statements best describes your situation at the moment? Please select one answer only

- I am repaying the money I owe and the total amount I owe is reducing
- I am repaying the money I owe but the total amount is about the same
- I am repaying the money I owe but the total amount is increasing
- I am repaying the money I owe but I don't know whether the total amount I owe has changed
- I have paid off my debts or arrears
- I have a DRO / have declared bankruptcy
- I am not repaying the money I owe

If you are not repaying money that you owe, skip to Question 31

Q30. Since you started repaying the money that you owe, have you asked to increase or decrease the amount that you pay?

Please select one answer per only

I have asked to increase the amount that I pay

I have asked to decrease the amount that I pay

The amount that I pay has stayed the same

This doesn't apply to me

Q31. Did the information or advice you received explain how to increase your income from wages, benefits, tax credits or any other source? *Please select one option only*

Yes

No

If you answered 'No' please go to Question 34

Q32. And did your income from any source increase as a result of the information or advice you received? *Please select one option only*

Yes

No

If you answered 'No', please go to Question 34

Q33. In what ways did your income increase/financial situation improve?

Please select all options that apply

Increased benefits or tax credits

Increased income from job

Received a charitable grant

Some other way

Q34. How many months or years do you think it will be until you have repaid the money that you owe?

Please select one option only

Less than one month

One to three months

3 to 6 month

6 to 12 months

1 to 2 years

2 to 3 years

3 to 5 years

More than 5 years

Don't know

This doesn't apply to me I have a DRO/ declared bankruptcy

Q35. If you are on a Debt Management Plan, do you pay a fee to the organisation that set up your Debt Management Plan?
Please select one option only

Yes

No

Don't know

I am not on a Debt Management Plan

Q36. If there is anything else you would like to tell us about your situation and the information or advice you received, please write it here:

• No nothing more to add

SECTION 5: About you and your household

37. Are you...

Tick one box only

Male

Female

38. In which of these age groups are you?

Tick one box only

18 to 25

26 to 30

31 to 35

36 to 40

41 to 45

46 to 50

51 to 55

56 to 60

61 to 65

66 to 70

71 to 75

76 and over

Unknown

39. In which of these ways do you occupy your home?

Tick one box only

Own it outright

Buying it with the help of a mortgage or loan

Pay part-rent and part-mortgage (shared ownership)

Rent it from a private landlord

Rent it from a local authority or housing association

Live rent-free (included rent-free in relative's or friend's property)

Homeless/Hostel/Sofa Surfing

Tied accommodation

Some other arrangement

40. Who else lives with you in your household?

Tick all boxes that apply

- No-one else
- Wife, husband or partner you live with as a couple
- Children aged 15 or under
- Children aged 16 to 18 who are still at school or college
- Children aged 16 to 18 who are not at school or college
- Other adult family members
- Other adults who share meals or a living room with you (e.g. a lodger)

41. To which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong?

Tick one box only

- White British
- Any other White background
- Mixed
(White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, or other mixed background)
- Asian or Asian British
(Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or any other Asian background)
- Black or Black British
(Black Caribbean, Black African, or any other Black background)
- Chinese
- Any other ethnic group

42. What is the highest level of education qualification that you have?

Tick one box only

- Degree or equivalent
- Below degree level
- Other
- No qualifications

43. Have you been diagnosed with any of the following conditions?

Tick all boxes that apply

- Long-term Health Condition
- Mental Health
- Physical Impairment (Non Sensory)
- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Learning Difficulty
- Cognitive Impairment
- Multiple Impairments
- Other Disability or type not given

44. Which of these descriptions best applies to you current situation?

Tick one box only

- In full-time education
- Working full-time (30 or more hours a week), including temporarily off work
- Working part-time (16 to 29 hours a week), including temporarily off work
- Working part-time (less than 16 hours a week), including temporarily off work
- Looking after the home or family
- Retired from paid work
- Unemployed
- On a government work or training scheme
- Sick or disabled
- Carer

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.

**THE RESULTS WILL BE USED TO HELP IMPROVE
THE QUALITY OF DEBT ADVICE SERVICES IN THE FUTURE**