



GRANTON INFORMATION CENTRE

Annual report

2024 - 2025

Table of Contents

Report from the Chairperson	3
Report from the Executive Manager	4
About Granton Information Centre	5
Our Mission & Values	6
Our Services	7
Year in Review	8
Impact and Achievements	
<i>(a) Service statistics</i>	10
<i>(b) Client demographics</i>	12
<i>(c) Client feedback</i>	16
<i>(d) Case studies</i>	24
Thank you to our supporters	27
Looking ahead	28
Contact us	29

Chairperson's report

As I write my report for 2024-2025 I can't help but feel reflective. The past few years have been challenging. Covid, home/ flexible working etc. and not least the cost of living crisis, and I am amazed at how our clients and staff adapted. As a local person I still see the negative impact on many individuals and I know that many people are really struggling. The staff team at GIC have continued to rise to the ongoing challenges and the increased demand on the service. I want to take this opportunity to thank them all.

I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the sad news that our former Chairperson, John Mulvey passed away on 5th January 2025. John was Chairperson at Granton Information Centre from 2006 - 2021. He was an exceptional and inspirational man, a formidable campaigner for social justice and anti-poverty initiatives. We were lucky to have John's support over many years and he'll be sadly missed.

In autumn 2024 we received notice that the EIJB (Edinburgh Integration Joint Board), GIC's main funder, was due to end its financial support to many third sector organisations, including GIC. This came as a bombshell to us as this would have resulted in staff redundancies and the closure of GIC. Following many meetings and discussions we secured funding through the EIJB until June 2025, and successfully negotiated a 9 month funding package from the City of Edinburgh Council to continue operating until March 2026. At this time we are unsure what the future holds for us but I can assure you that I will work tirelessly, along with the centre's staff, to maintain the much needed services that we deliver.

As always I give thanks to Caroline, committee colleagues and all staff at GIC for their loyalty, dedication and hard work, especially throughout this latest funding crisis.

Billy Fitzpatrick
Chairperson

Manager's report

2024-2025 has been a busy and demanding year for the staff and management committee at GIC.

It started well when we were successful in securing a second year's funding for our Advice in Accessible Settings project (AIAS), funded by Advice UK. We are very grateful for their ongoing financial support, allowing us to continue working to increase access to advice services.

Funding challenges dominated the year as everything changed when funding cuts to the third sector were announced, leaving GIC in a perilous position and the staff were thrown into a period of great uncertainty regarding job security. As the demand for advice services was growing, the cuts announced by the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board would see the services delivered by GIC come to an end at the end of the year.

I must say how proud I am to work with a team of people who continued to work to improve the lives of our clients, whilst having to deal with their own impending job losses.

We did secure funding until March 2026 but the future for advice services across Edinburgh is still uncertain.

Caroline Pickering
Executive Manager

About Granton Information Centre

Granton Information Centre (GIC) was established in 1984. Through the provision of free, confidential and independent advice, advocacy and representation services, we aim to assist with benefit issues, new claims and appeals and address financial pressures for individuals and families residing in North West and North East Edinburgh.

Our clients are at the heart of everything we do. By adopting a client-centred approach to our work and providing services within a wide range of accessible venues and GP surgeries, we aim to meet the individual needs of our clients.

The main issues we deal with at GIC are:

- Welfare benefits advice
- Debt/money advice
- Charitable grants/clothing, food and fuel bank referrals.

We can also help with housing issues for homeowners, housing association tenants and tenants in the private rented sector; particularly those threatened with repossession actions for mortgage and rent arrears and those experiencing other debt issues that may put their home at risk.

Our Team:

Management committee

Chairperson	Billy Fitzpatrick
Vice Chair	Frances Durie
Member	Donald McDonald
Member	Frank O'Dea
Member	Fiona Marshall
Member	David Norcliffe

Staff

Executive manager	Caroline Pickering
Office and Administration manager	Gail Milner
Administration and reception team	Elisabeth Ireland
Administration and reception team	Malina Stancescu
Advice service manager	Flora Watson
Advice service manager	Elvira Vila - Left 31/12/2024

Advice team

Shannon Glendinning
Kay Wilson
Emily Carson
Karen Conway
Pui-Kei Wong - Left 1/11/2024
Summer Barrett
Molly Morgan
Amelia Armit

Our mission

Granton Information Centre aims to support residents of Edinburgh (primarily targeting our local community of North Edinburgh) by working towards the eradication of poverty. We provide free, accessible, impartial, confidential, and independent advice, advocacy and representation services, with a focus on benefits, debt, and housing issues.

Our values

The principles that underpin every aspect of our work, shaping our decisions, and informing our actions.

Integrity

Acting honestly and ethically in all dealings with clients, partners, and the community

Confidentiality

Respecting the privacy of individuals seeking advice, ensuring their information is protected and handled with care

Impartiality

Providing unbiased guidance that is not influenced by external interests; always remaining neutral and focused on the best interests of our clients

Respect

Treating individuals with dignity, understanding, and empathy whilst recognising their unique circumstances

Accessibility

Ensuring GIC's services are available to all those who would benefit from our assistance

Empowerment

Aiming to empower individuals to make informed decisions and take control of their situations by providing the knowledge, resources, and support they need

Transparency

Communicating clearly and openly about services, processes, and limitations, so that individuals understand what to expect

Accountability

Being responsible for the services provided and ensuring that GIC remains committed to its mission of supporting our clients

Collaboration

Working together with other organisations, communities, and stakeholders to achieve the best possible outcomes for those seeking advice

Social Justice

Promoting fairness, equality, and access to support for marginalised or disadvantaged groups, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to receive high quality advice and guidance

Our services

What we do:

- Undertake benefit checks to identify benefit entitlement and any other issues
- Help claimants complete benefit claim forms and applications
- Provide advice and advocacy on all welfare benefit issues and represent at benefit appeal tribunals
- Provide advice, advocacy and representation for home-owners, housing association tenants and tenants in the private rented sector
- Discuss options for dealing with debt (renegotiation, bankruptcy, Debt Arrangement Scheme)
- Arrange payment plans for priority debt to avoid bank or wage arrestment
- Negotiate with creditors / landlords
- Apply for various grants and make client referrals to clothing and food banks.

We deliver advice in a range of settings:

- Granton Information Centre
- Restalrig Hub
- Saheliya
- Pilton Community Health Project
- GP outreaches:
 - Muirhouse Medical Group
 - Crewe Medical Centre
 - Mill Lane Surgery
 - Restalrig Park Medical Centre
 - Ladywell Medical Centre East (currently delivered from GIC)
 - The Access Place

Year in review

This past year has been one of resilience, growth, and continued collaboration in the face of funding uncertainties and rising demand for advice services. We've remained dedicated to delivering expert advice on welfare rights, debt, and housing—reaching the communities most in need. Our long-term strategic goal of eradicating poverty through accessible advice in our local area continues to guide our everyday work.

Advice in Accessible Settings

Our Advice in Accessible Settings project—funded by the Scottish Government through Advice UK—continued to expand the reach of our services. Originally funded in 2023 for one year, we are delighted that renewed funding was granted to extend the programme through 2024-2025.

This project remains a cornerstone of our commitment to partnership-based delivery, improving access to advice for individuals from underserved or marginalised communities. Our work alongside **The Ripple Project**, **Saheliya**, and **Pilton Community Health Project** has enabled us to embed advice services directly where they are most needed.

Special thanks go to **Summer Barrett**, who has taken on project management responsibilities and ensured effective coordination between partners and the delivery of a high-quality and inclusive service.

Edinburgh Housing Advice Partnership

We have continued to deliver housing advice as part of the Edinburgh Housing Advice Partnership (EHAP), working in partnership with the **Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI)**. Funded by the Scottish Legal Aid Board, this initiative provides robust support to tenants and homeowners facing housing issues.

In 2024, we welcomed **Molly Morgan**, our new housing adviser. Since joining midway through the year, Molly has rapidly become an indispensable part of our team. Following a period of intensive training and shadowing, she now leads on our EHAP delivery—advising private renters, housing association tenants, and homeowners, and representing clients in court to prevent evictions.

Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) Grant Funding

This year brought considerable financial uncertainty when, in September 2024, the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board proposed an early termination of its grant programme, scheduled to end in January 2025—three months ahead of the agreed deadline. The impact of such a decision would have been devastating not only to our charity but across Edinburgh’s third sector, particularly for organisations serving vulnerable and protected groups in disadvantaged communities.

Fortunately, local councillors voted to reject the proposal and instead supported an amendment extending EIJB funding through to **June 2025**, allowing additional time for vital discussions with the City of Edinburgh Council and sector partners on a longer-term, sustainable funding model. This extension enables us to continue to deliver our locality-based services in the Granton and Restalrig areas, as well as our services embedded in GP practices.

We are immensely grateful for the backing from local representatives and are hopeful that this inclusive approach will pave the way for flexible, responsive funding that sustains services and fosters resilience in a challenging financial climate.

Community Engagement and Collaboration

We love the opportunity to participate in local community events whenever possible. These gatherings not only offer a valuable chance to connect with local residents and promote our services, but they also act as a form of early engagement or intervention. By providing an approachable, friendly presence in informal settings, we’re able to offer brief advice, initiate conversations, and arrange follow-up support where needed. Over the past year, we’ve taken part in community engagement events such as delivering benefits awareness workshops to the West Edinburgh Community Support Group, Saheliya’s Women’s Group, and the Ripple Project; and an “Info Max Day” community event at Granton Skills and Wellbeing Centre.

In addition to reaching out directly to the public in our local community, we regularly attend forums and networking events to share knowledge and stay connected with partner organisations that share our commitment to tackling poverty and inequality. This year, we participated in the R2 group; the Edinburgh Poverty Network; the Advice UK Scottish Members Forum; and the Edinburgh Advice Partnership, among others.

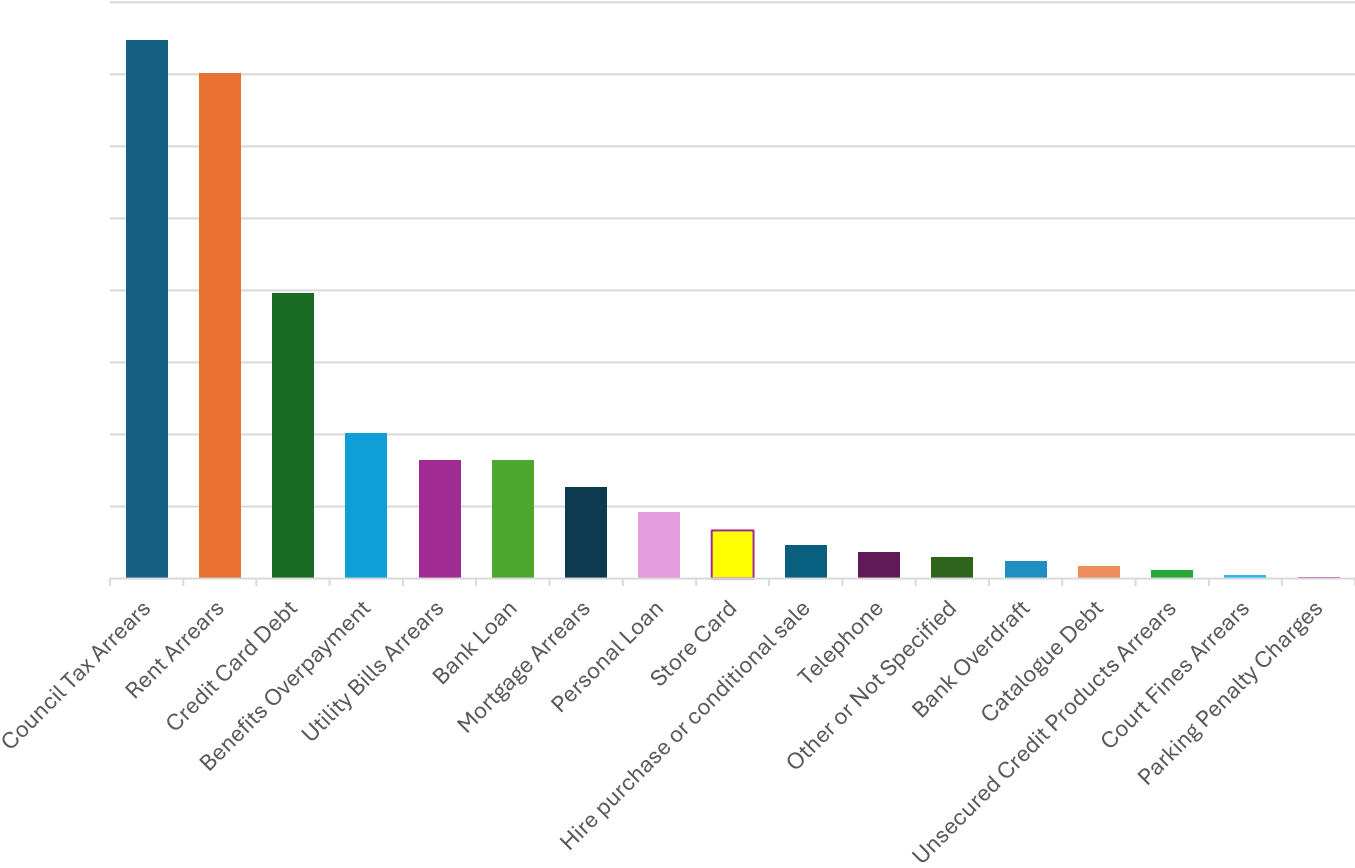
These opportunities are instrumental in deepening our local partnerships, exchanging insight and expertise, and strengthening our referral networks. We’re grateful to the many organisations who welcomed us and helped facilitate this collaborative work.

Impact and achievements

Granton Information Centre advisers worked on **3557 cases and enquiries** for **2994 individual clients**.

Our advisers recorded a total of **£529,727.36** debt in 2024/2025. The biggest categories were Council Tax, Rent Arrears, Credit Card Debt, Benefit Overpayments and Utility Arrears.

Debt recorded in 2024/25 by type



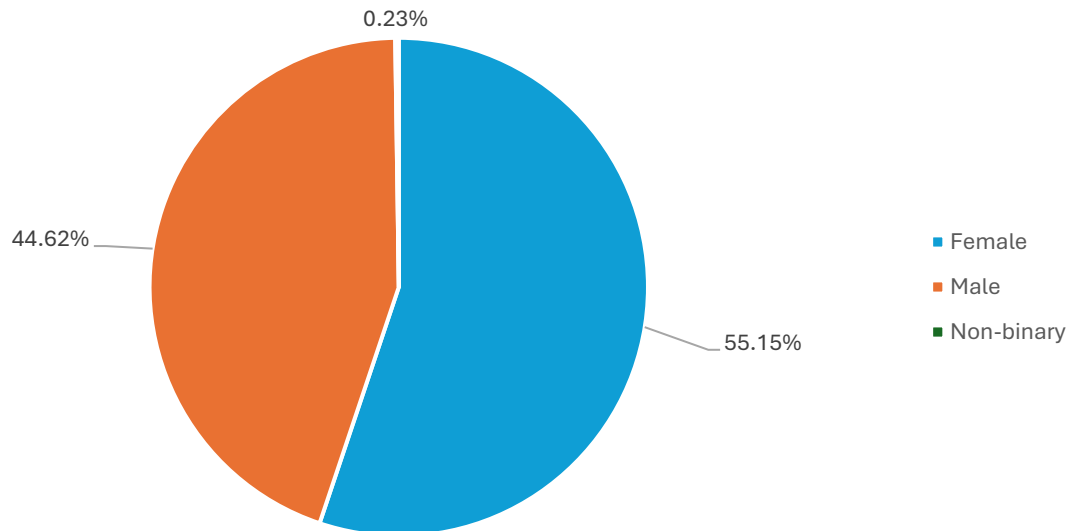
Financial gains totalling **£4,554,082.47** were recorded.

On average, each client who gained money gained **£7,811.46**.

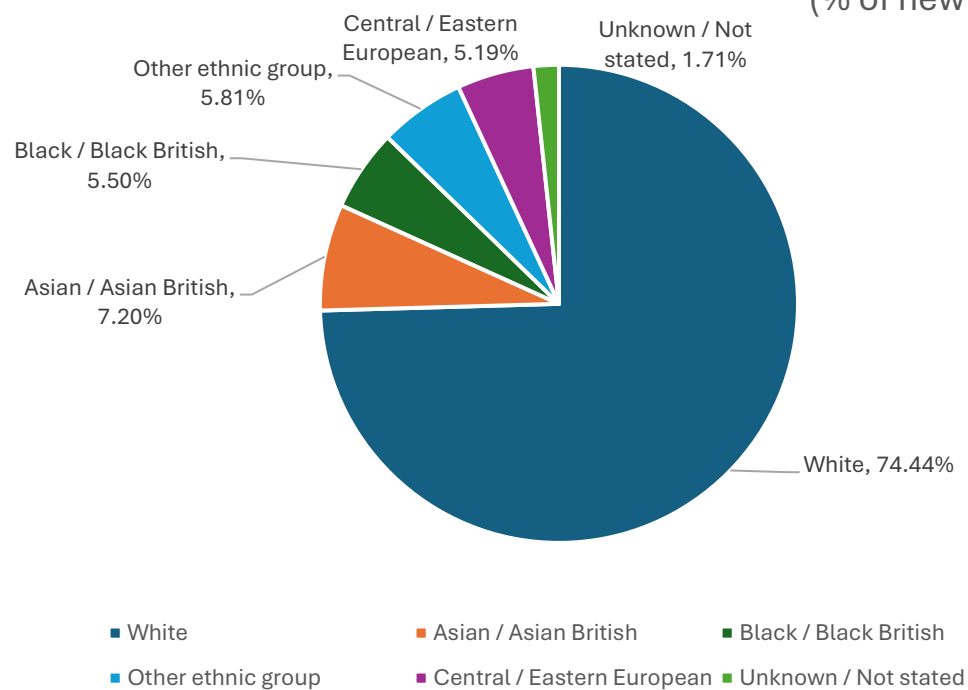
Gain Type	% of total financial gain
Adult Disability Payment	45.70%
Universal Credit	24.89%
Attendance allowance	6.39%
Housing Benefit / Local Housing Allowance	3.68%
Child Disability Payment	3.27%
Pension Credit	2.49%
Severe Disability Premium	2.18%
State Pension	2.01%
Personal Independence Payment	1.61%
Charitable Grant	1.14%
Scottish Child Payment	0.92%
Council Tax Reduction or Discount	0.90%
ESA (Contribution Based)	0.89%
Sequestration or Debt Written Off	0.79%
Child Benefit	0.77%
Carer's Allowance	0.63%
ESA (Income Based)	0.61%
Bereavement Benefits + Funeral Support Payment	0.41%
Discretionary Housing Payment	0.40%
Disability Living Allowance	0.21%
Best Start Grant + Best Start Foods	0.08%
Scottish Welfare Fund	0.03%
Warm Home Discount	0.003%

Client demographics

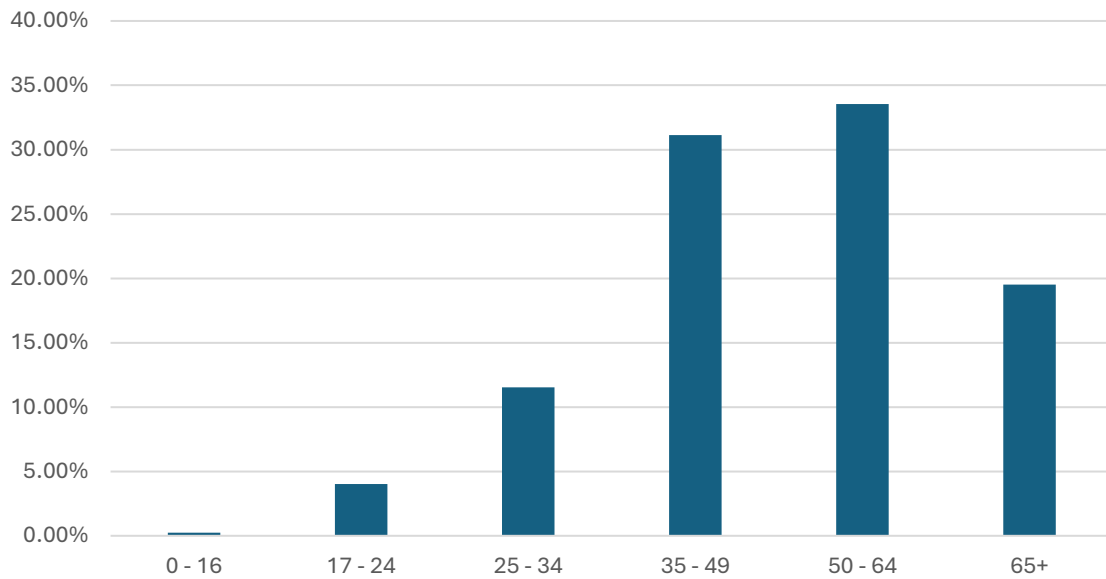
Gender: % of New Clients



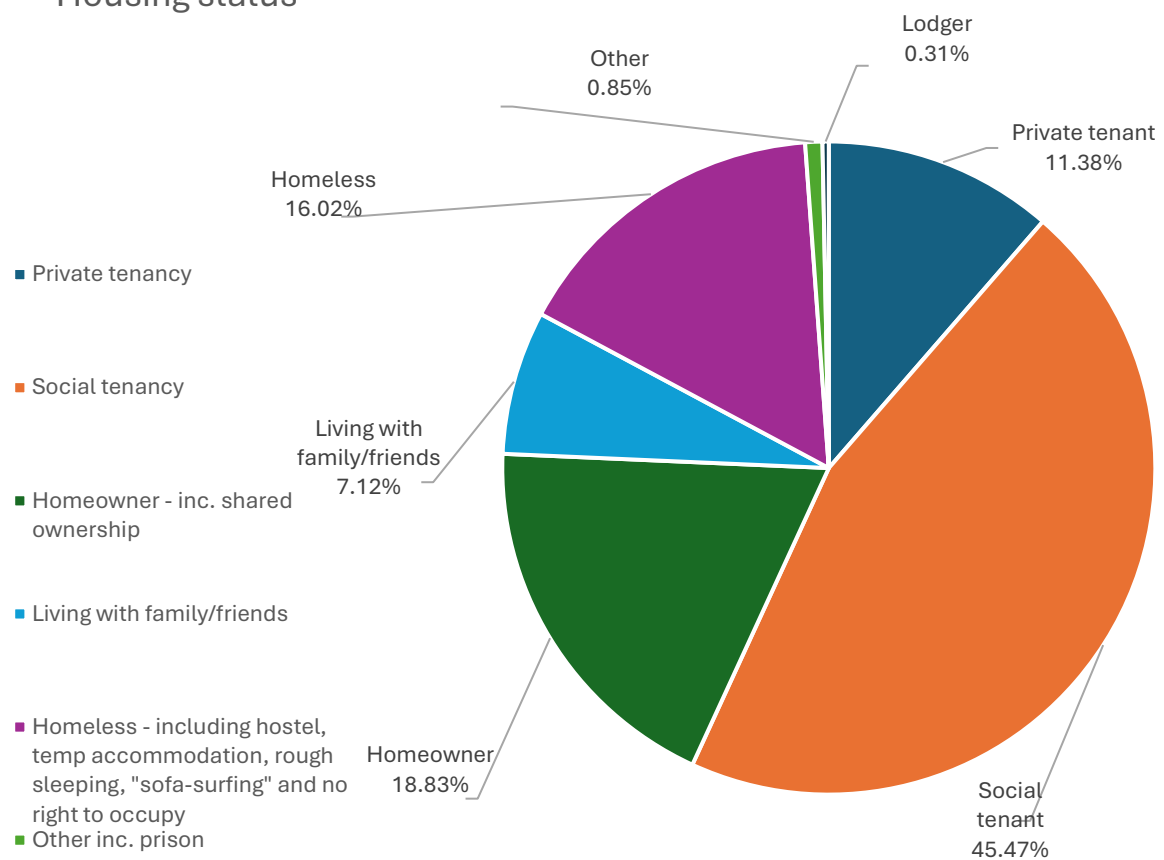
Ethnic origin
(% of new clients)



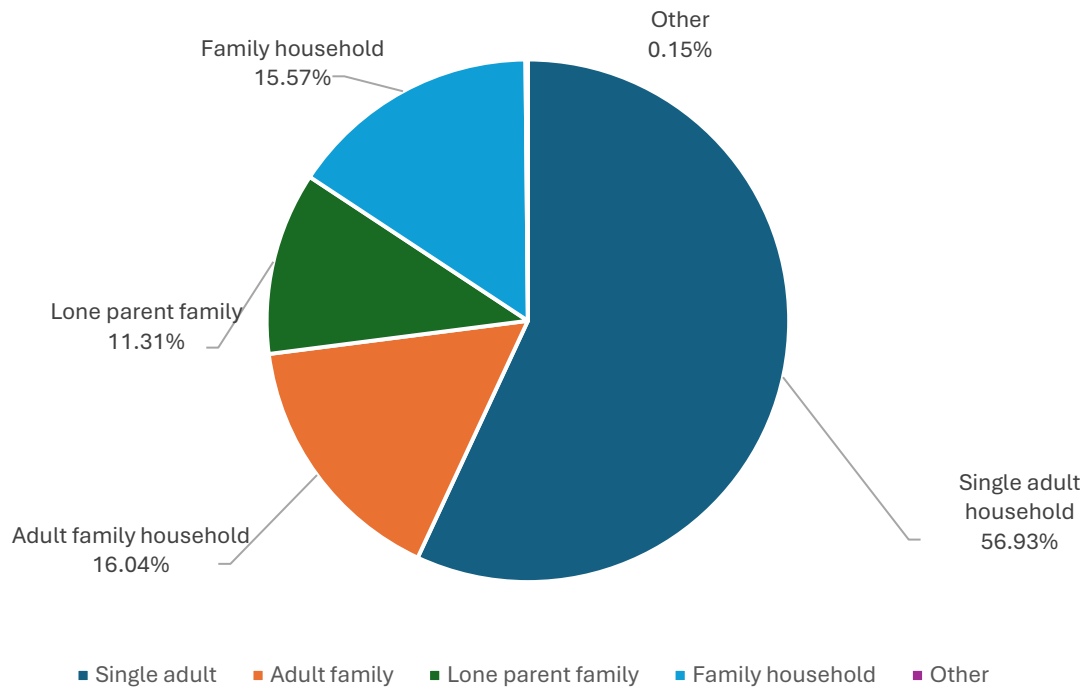
Age range (% of new clients)



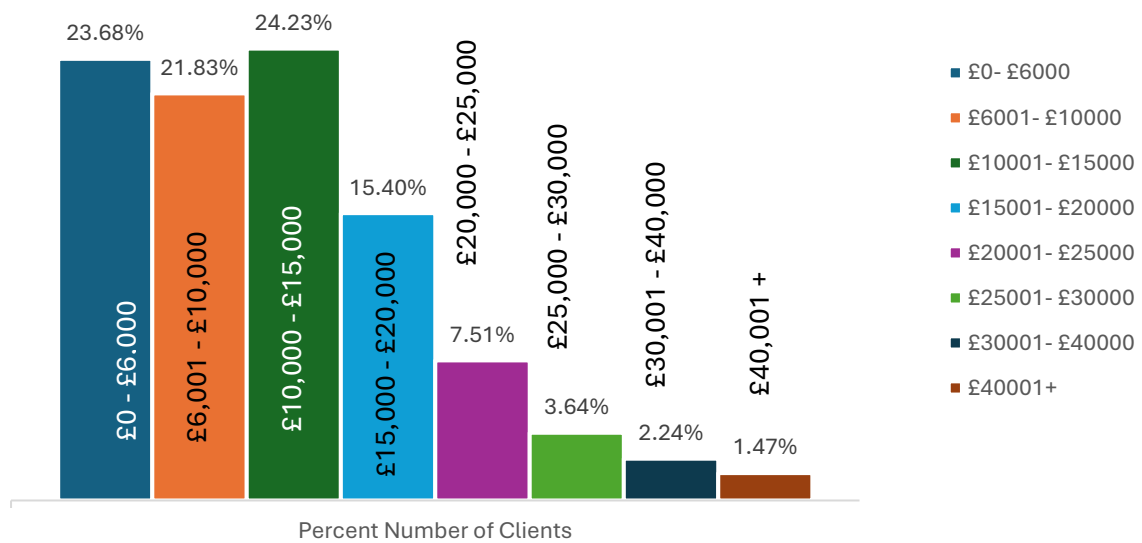
Housing status



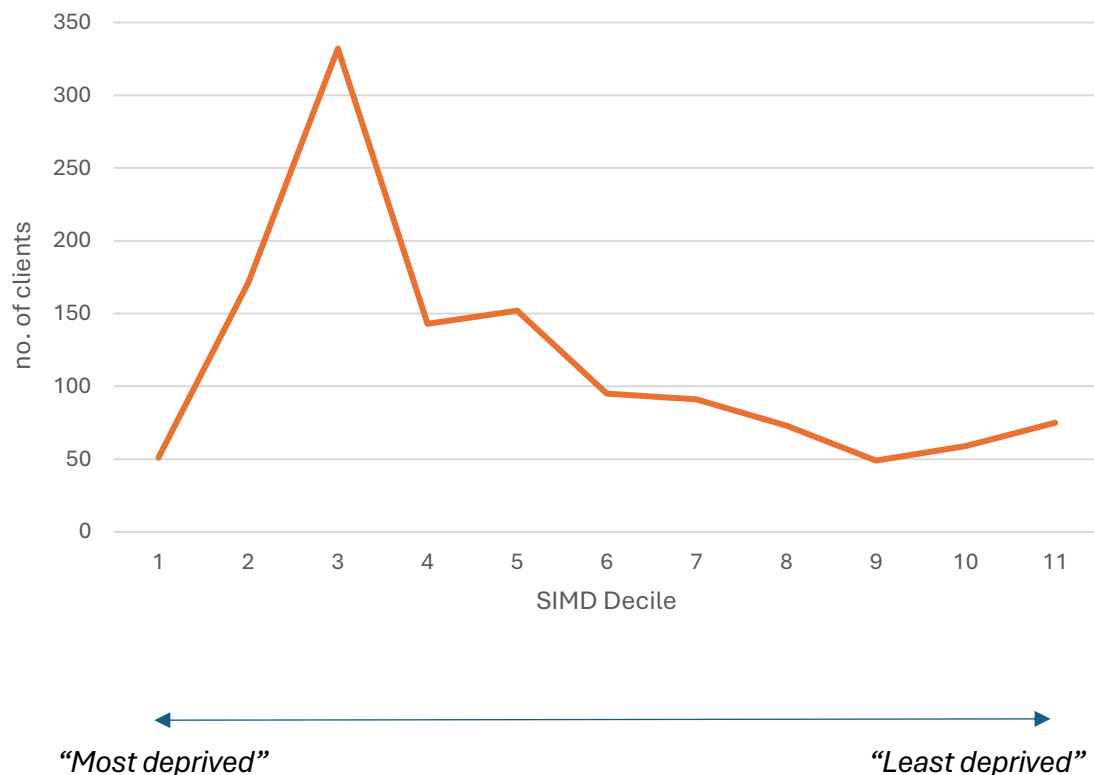
Household status (% of new clients)



Household income band (% of new clients)



Client postcode by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile



Monitoring deprivation

We use data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) to ensure our services are reaching people in deprived areas. The SIMD assesses small geographic areas on seven criteria: income, employment, and health, access to services, crime, and housing. SIMD is the Scottish Government's standard approach to identify areas of multiple deprivation in Scotland. It is an area-based measure of relative deprivation: not every person in a highly deprived area will themselves be experiencing high levels of deprivation.

The above graph shows the concentration of our services on each "decile". A decile is a group of 10%: the most deprived 10% of areas in Scotland are decile 1, and the least deprived 10% of areas in Scotland are decile 10. The vertical axis is number of clients, charted against the decile in which their postcode falls. This graph demonstrates that much of our work is with people who live in areas of multiple deprivation.

40% of clients who engaged with GIC services in 2024/25 (whether with a new case, or ongoing) lived in decile 1 or 2: the 20% most-deprived areas in Scotland.

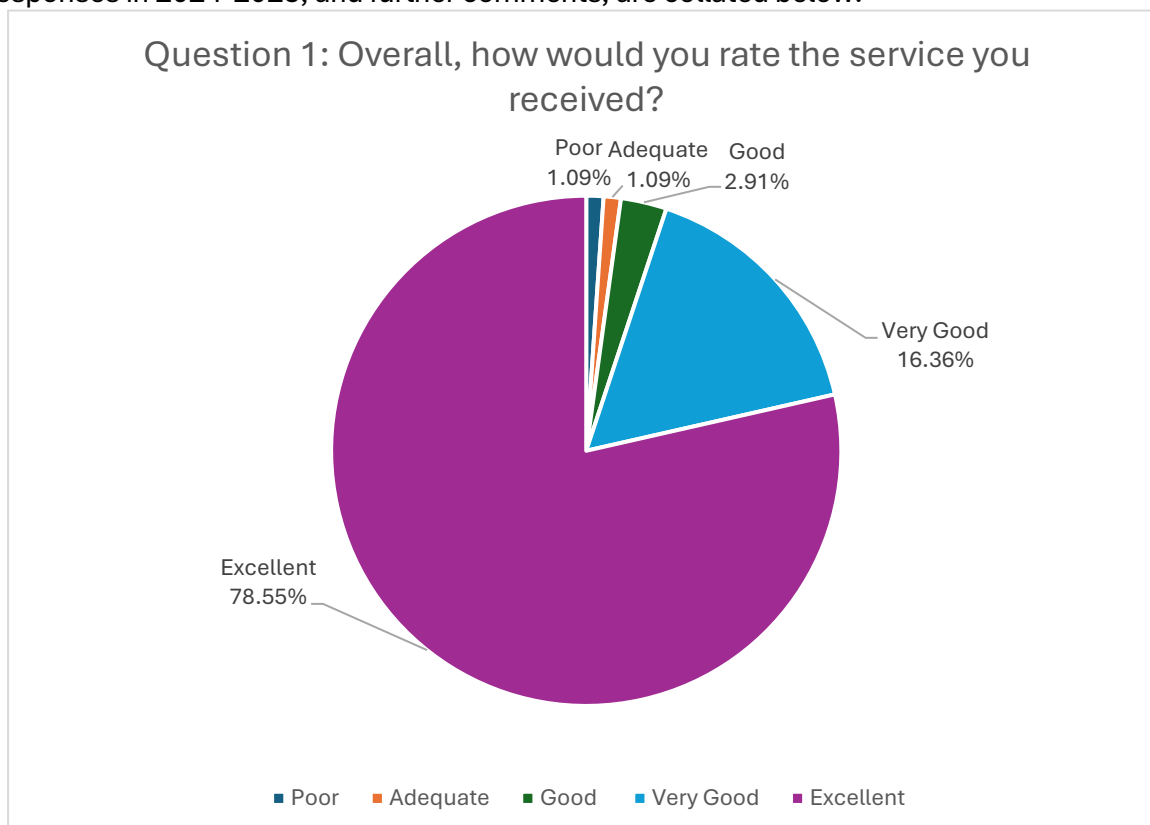
4% of our clients live in a postcode not currently part of the SIMD database. This is most likely because they are in a new-build not registered when the SIMD was last reported. Next SIMD publication is thought to be late 2026.

Measuring our impact

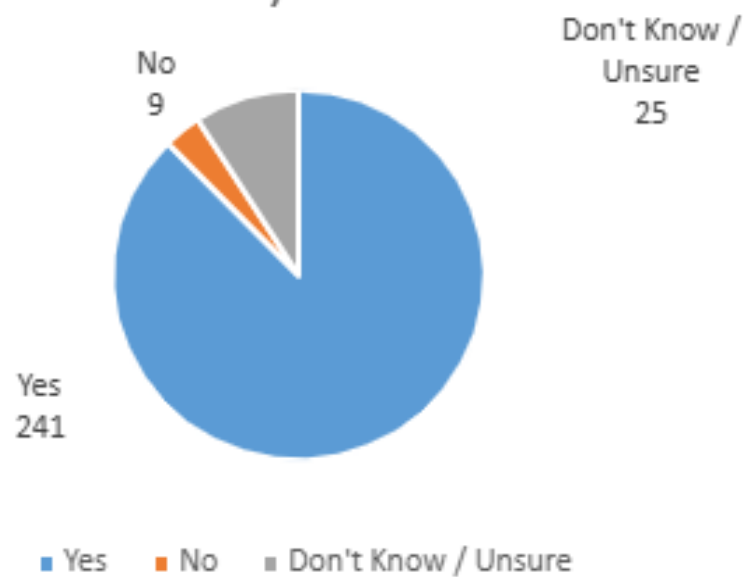
We understand that money worries are damaging to people's wellbeing – their physical health, their mental health, and how they feel about their life overall. This means that we can't measure the full impact of our work just by looking at the numbers of clients or the financial gains resulting from our work. Feedback on the accessibility of our services, how our advice made the client feel, and the wider impact of the outcome are all just as important as the financial gains, but harder for us to measure. We therefore ask our clients to complete a short, voluntary, and anonymous questionnaire when we close their case. We ask the clients to select from a range of answers to the following seven questions:

1. Overall, how would you rate the service you received?
2. Did the advice you received help to resolve your issue?
3. After receiving advice, do you have more knowledge and confidence in managing the issue?
4. Has your health and/or wellbeing improved as a result of the advice you received?
5. Are you financially better off as a result of the advice you received?
6. Would you seek advice again in the future, if you needed it?
7. Would you recommend the service to other people?

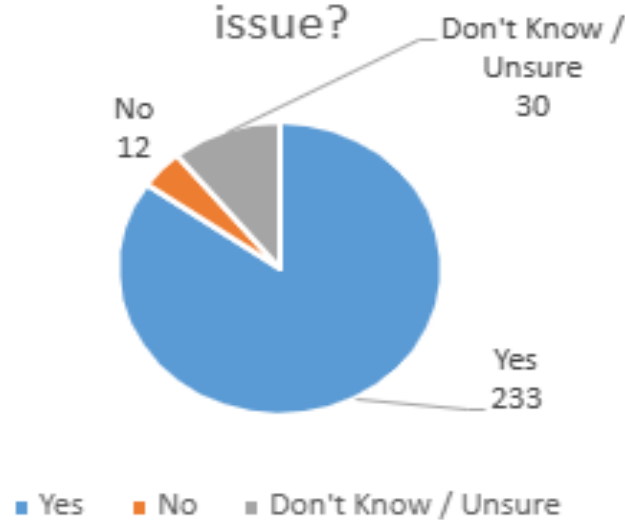
Responses in 2024-2025, and further comments, are collated below.



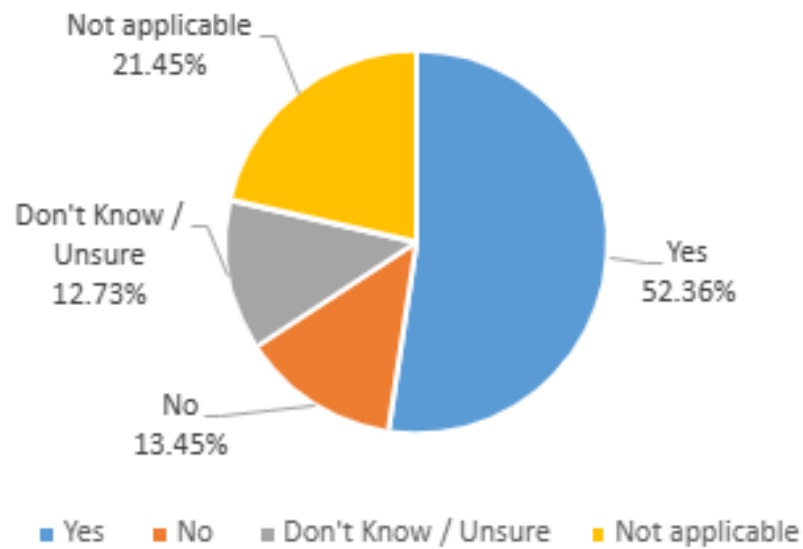
Question 2: Did the advice you received help to resolve your issue?



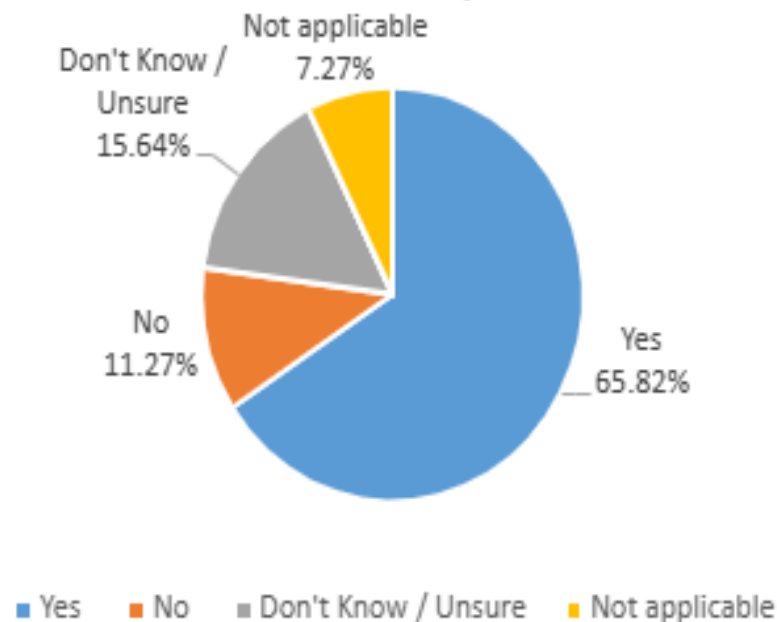
Question 3: After receiving advice, do you have more knowledge and confidence in managing the issue?

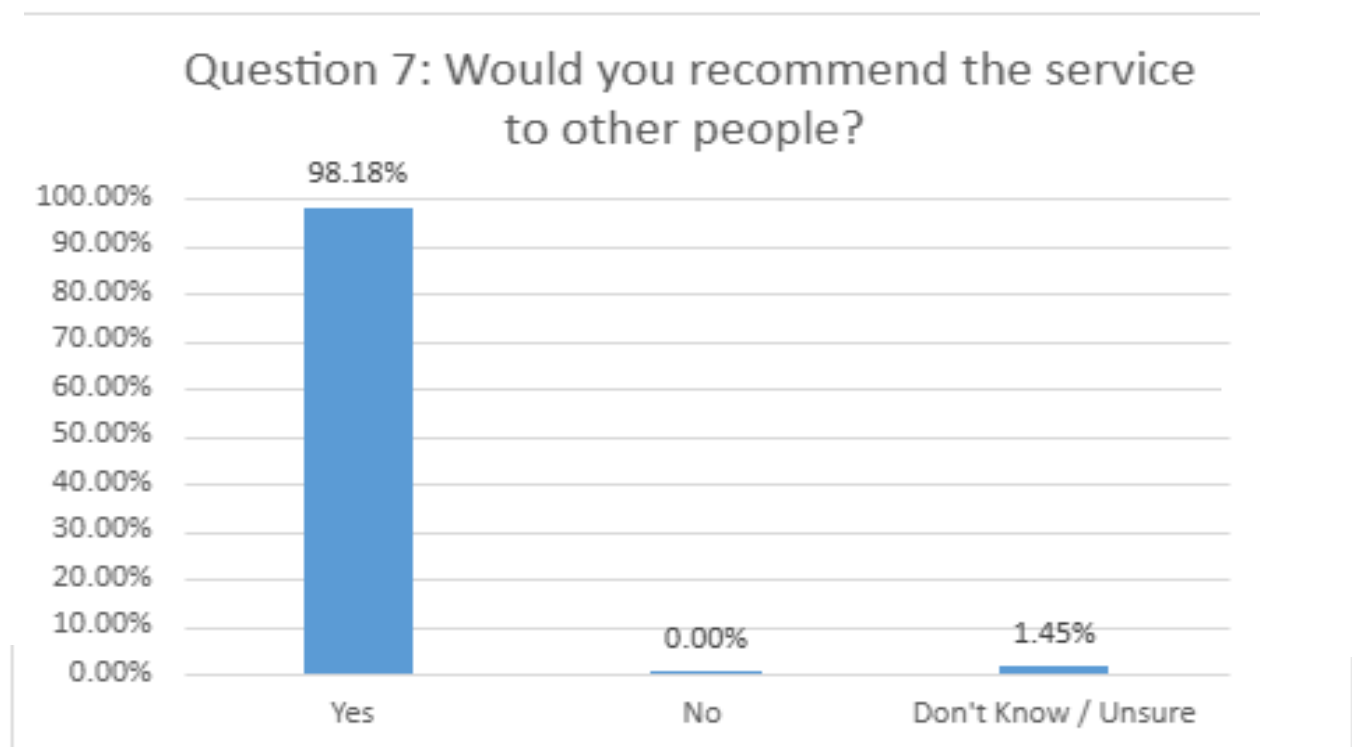
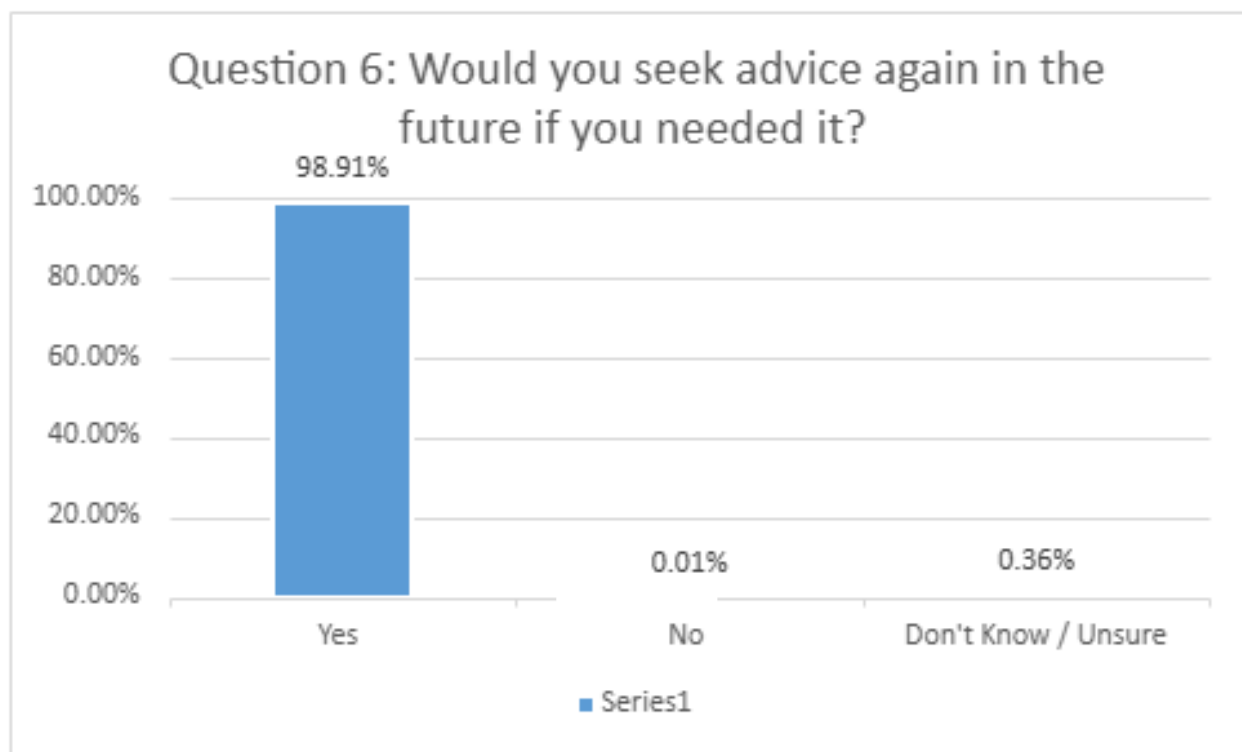


Question 4: Has your health and/or wellbeing improved as a result of the advice you received?



Question 5: Are you financially better off as a result of the advice you received?





What our clients said about us

Life-changing help. Thank you.

[Adviser] was very helpful and patient. She has expert knowledge and understanding of my condition. She treated me with respect and compassion. A very valuable service.

[Adviser] was very helpful when I made enquiries as to how a hospital stay would affect my ADP payments. She was very professional and explained she was still in training and verified information was correct with [senior adviser]. I was reassured and would recommend your service.

Very good service would recommend to anyone needing a bit [of] help

I would recommend GIC to everyone. I have anxiety bad and I was helped very good and was able to communicate as I felt at ease and was grateful to [adviser] for taking the time and help as I needed. Thank you x

[Adviser] was very accommodating to my concerns. She was very supportive and helpful.

Very helpful and friendly.

Been coming to you for years. It's great that you are there to help. Lovely people you all are.

GIC is fantastic helped me sort all the forms I had to fill in properly and advise me what my entitlements were, big shout out to [adviser] she's just amazing

I am very grateful for the help to apply for Attendance Allowance having been referred by the equally helpful [community link worker at GP practice]. He advised me I may qualify and [adviser] helped me with the difficult forms. I could not have filled them out by myself. Human help is so important these days. Also some people don't have the equipment to apply online or the skills to use digital technology. The centre makes benefits more accessible to those who need them most. I have a degree and was a nurse but needed help! Thank you

I would never have managed to complete the form as it was huge and I would have had difficulty understanding the complexity of the questions regarding my many physical and mental health issues and what I needed help with. I'm very grateful to GIC a much needed resource.

Granton Information Centre is a local treasure for the community.

The staff are so helpful and were easy to talk to, it was not stressful at all thank you.

[Adviser] helped me make a change to my existing claim and was awarded more money. This has made a massive improvement to my mental health and can afford to send my children to swimming lessons and art class which they've always wanted to go to.

Everyone was very helpful and knowledgeable.
Thank you!

I wish to thank you all for your kindness and help and I am very grateful for the money I received as a result, it will come in very handy over the winter period and will overall improve my health. Thank you again.

The help I got took a lot of weight of my mind, I was worried a lot, being old did not help and my health is not perfect. The lady I seen was very good and helped me to relax when talking to her as I have a stammer. She was very helpful in every way.

Granton Information Centre has always treated me with respect, and reassured me I can trust people in certain circumstances well done GIC.

I would have struggled to get everything that I needed without your help. You helped me once before on another matter. Both times you've been a great help. You have made my life immeasurably better. Thank you.

[Adviser] has been an absolute star throughout my interaction with her, her wisdom and knowledge has helped me immensely.

[Adviser] was absolutely brilliant helping me fill out the minefield of forms that go with universal credit, council tax reduction and the Scottish disability forms 10/10 service.

Thank you for all your help. God bless you!

Excellent service, helping the community. Thank you for all your help.

I have been to Granton Information Centre 3 times over the years. Recently been and seen [adviser] who was very patient and understanding and helped me so much thank you

Good and friendly service, thanks

Advisor was really good and helped me understand a few things and now just waiting outcome and feel positive about returning to GIC if needed thanks Very much

There are no words to say how grateful for the kindness, knowledge and support from [adviser]. I honestly don't know what I'd have done without her. Thank you for being there for me.

[Adviser] was great help for me and has helped me and made my life a little bit better off and once again due to the help of [adviser].

Very pleasant / helpful to talk to.

[Adviser] and [another adviser] were excellent, I am still waiting on my blue badge, which I expected from what I have been told, about the waiting time, did receive my attendance allowance of which I am truly grateful. My health is long term so unfortunately I am stuck with it. Thank you for everything and if required I will seek advice again.

[Adviser] was amazing. I am so grateful. It was a long and stressful process however now I am feeling more secure with my finances. Well done.

Very professional approach towards the client and the situation. Very intelligent level headed take and amazing knowledge on how to resolve the situation. Genuine care for the client and makes sure the client understands everything, very accommodating. Extremely sincere person. Has a friendly take towards any situation and is very willing to help.

Always polite, respectful and confident.

The young lady who assisted me with my issues was very helpful, patient and I am so grateful! Keep up the wonderful work everyone

Defender of the people.

I appreciate all the help and advice offered to me from the courteous and knowledgeable staff at GIC. Special mention of [adviser] however- she is a shining star of a woman and a true testament to the mission of GIC. Life would be so much nicer if there were more people like [her] around, that's for sure!

A massive thank you to [adviser] who has helped me leaps and bounds, she has went far and beyond for myself and family. Thank you

My adviser was knowledgeable, patient, an excellent communicator. As a family we are grateful for her support and expertise. Thank you GIC

Me and my husband would love to thank you very much for helping us in such a difficult situation. Thank you for your support along the way. Thanks to people like you, the sun seems to shine brighter for people like us. Once again, thank you so much.

I have used the GIC a few times over the last 6-7 years to help me with DWP forms. It's a great service, I'd be lost without them.

I was genuinely very impressed by your professionalism and great communicational skills which you displayed throughout your communications with me whilst contacting The D.W.P. with reference to the reinstating of my Attendance Allowance and your enquiries about possible personal care application as well. Having had to contact many departments in relation to enquiries for my wife whilst I cared for her at home for approximately 6 years, right through Covid and more recently for myself as my health issues grew, I can honestly say that I was so lucky to have been referred to yourself by [community link worker], as you were very calm and collected, making it easy for me to understand all that you were doing for me as an ageing pensioner in such a clear and professional manner. I would appreciate it very much if you could pass this email on to your line manager as a way of notifying him/her how lucky they are to have employed you.

My son [N] is autistic and is not trusting of people he does not know. [Adviser] made him feel at ease and he was able to meet with her on his own after his first visit, where I attended with him. [N] is not I.T. literate or very good on the phone and he would not have managed to complete all the relevant forms by himself. He now feels more able to contact government helplines by phone.

Thank you for all your help and well done to all the staff in the centre have a good day 🌻 🌻 🌻

[Adviser] was amazing easy to talk to and with health issues it's not often I can manage to talk she was amazing and definitely would come back to see her if I had any issues thank you

I found the whole experience very helpful I don't know the outcome yet. I would definitely use your help and advice again and I have recommended it to a friend

The service I have always received is very good. G.I.C. do the utmost to resolve the situation I fall into, keep up the good work thank you

Don't know how we would have managed without [adviser]!!...she was a godsend!!....without doubt knew her stuff!!.... [another adviser] excellent as well and she is still helping us!!...wonderful team and a big thank you to them!!

Amazing people and great help and advice. Couldn't be happier with the service. Thank you guys

My advisor was knowledgeable, patient, an excellent communicator. As a family we are grateful for her support and expertise. Thank you GIC

Thank you to all who completed our client satisfaction questionnaire or otherwise provided feedback!

Case Study 1: Bernard and Agnes

A couple, husband and wife, in their mid-60s and approaching pension age, sought advice from Granton Information Centre. Although the husband and wife were registered at different GP practices, fortunately they were both registered in a practice in which GIC offer embedded welfare rights outreach clinics.

Background: Both clients had long-term health conditions. Agnes was in receipt of Personal Independence Payment at the standard rate of the daily living component and the enhanced rate of the mobility component, while Bernard received the standard rate of the mobility component for his own Adult Disability Payment claim. Bernard was claiming carer's allowance for the support he was giving Agnes. They had a joint claim for income-related Employment Support Allowance, including the carer premium, with Bernard's carer's allowance deducted in full from the ESA award. Their total household income prior to seeking advice was £442.10/week.

First, Bernard sought advice from the adviser working within his GP practice. He had been signposted to the service by the mental health nurse. He told the adviser that his health was deteriorating and he was finding it increasingly difficult to cope with his caring responsibilities. On discussion about Bernard's health, and the impact it was having on his day-to-day life, the adviser identified that he was likely entitled to a higher award of Adult Disability Payment. The adviser helped him to report his worsened health conditions and assisted with the lengthy change-of-circumstances questionnaire. As a result, he was awarded the enhanced rate of both the daily living and the mobility component: resulting in a weekly entitlement of £184.30, and generating a lump sum back payment of approximately £7,000.

One consequence of this increased award was that the couple could then receive the severe disability premium on their ESA award, instead of the Bernard claiming carer's allowance. The adviser helped apply for the severe disability premium, resulting in their ESA award increasing by £117.40/week (lost the carer element of £45.60, gained the severe disability premium for both people at £81.50 each, and carer's allowance of £81.90 is no longer in payment so is not being deducted from the ESA award). As this change in entitlement was awarded retrospectively, a lump sum backdate of £5,647.80 was paid.

Shortly after Bernard reported his health was worsening, Agnes received notification that her Personal Independence Payment claim was being transferred to Adult Disability Payment, as part of the case transfer of devolved benefits to Social Security Scotland. She was very

apprehensive about this change, and was afraid of losing her existing award. However, the GIC welfare adviser working within her own GP practice met Agnes and discussed the details of her health conditions, and identified that her health and support needs have increased since her last assessment. The adviser helped with the review form, providing detail on how the conditions had progressed. Initially, Agnes was awarded Adult Disability Payment at the same rate as her Personal Independence Payment had been. The adviser helped gather supporting medical evidence and successfully challenged this decision, resulting in a new award of the enhanced rate of both the daily living and the mobility component (an increase of £35.90/week, with ongoing entitlement of £184.30/week). She received a lump sum backdate payment of £1,824.37.

After having sought advice, the couple's total weekly income was £751.30 with ongoing awards of £184.30, £184.30, and £163.00/week generated from claims submitted by GIC advisers (combining to £531.60/week). This is an increase of 70%. They received approximately £14,472.17 in lump sum payments.

Bernard and Maria intend to use the lump sum payments to pay for adaptations to their property, including having a wet room fitted and grab rails. They are hopeful that this will enable them to remain independent and in their own home for as long as possible, while also reducing the strain on Bernard as a carer.

Case Study 2: Maria

Maria was referred to GIC's advice service by a community link worker from the Pilton Community Health project. Maria is a lone parent who lives with her two young children – the older of whom has significant health issues and requires full time care. As a result, Maria is unable to work. Maria was in receipt of Universal Credit, Scottish Child Payment, Child Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. However, no disability benefits for her daughter or carer benefits for herself were in place. Since no child disability benefits were in place, she was being pressured to find employment by Universal Credit, adding to her stress.

Maria attended for an initial benefit check appointment where entitlement to child disability payment for her daughter was identified. In the appointment, Maria said she was struggling to cope with rising fuel prices and had got into some debt with her fuel provider. The adviser referred Maria to Home Energy Scotland for specialist support on fuel. Maria

also told the adviser that they did not have a bed or mattress for their youngest child. The adviser recognised that this was an urgent need and was having a big impact on the family's wellbeing, so applied for a charitable grant. The grant was approved and Maria received £200 to help towards the costs. A follow-up appointment for Child Disability Payment was scheduled the same week to complete the application. The advisor requested supporting information from the child's school on the Maria's behalf. Additionally, the community link worker was able to supply supporting medical evidence through the GP. This meant the application was well supported with medical evidence and professional statements. Child Disability Payment of middle rate care £72.65pw and lowrate mobility £28.70pw, amounting to £439.18pm was awarded. Maria also received a backdated payment of £1300. The overall gain recorded was £6,486.20. Following the Child Disability Payment award, Maria was assisted to report the change to Universal Credit. This resulted in entitlement to Carer element and Disabled Child Element on Universal Credit. This increased her award by £354.42pm and also meant that she was no longer expected to work, allowing her to focus on her caring responsibilities. The overall financial gains for the Maria's yearly income amounted to £10,739.24 in addition to the one-off grant of £200. Additionally, the pressure to look for work was removed from Universal Credit due to being recognised as a carer. Maria said she would use the extra income to get more support for her daughter including purchasing more sensory items to help her develop.

Our partnership with the community link workers was essential in this success. Maria was enabled to access the service through an appointment made by the link worker. Additionally, they provided ongoing help by sending supporting medical evidence to help with the Child Disability Payment application. Working with referral partners also maximised the positive outcomes: Maria was able to access specialist energy advice and address her fuel debt. Additionally, through the charitable grant application, Maria was able to get her youngest child their own bed. A further appointment has been arranged, to help Maria apply for Carer Support Payment.

Thank You to Our Supporters

Thank you to our funders: without whom our work would not be possible.

- Advice UK
- Scottish Legal Aid Board
- The Scottish Government
- NHS Lothian
- The Edinburgh Integration Joint Board
- The City of Edinburgh Council

Thank you to our partners and colleagues, within the advice sector, the health sector, the voluntary sector, and more:

- Citizens Advice Edinburgh
- Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI)
- Pilton Community Health Project
- The Ripple Project at Restalrig Hub
- Saheliya
- The Trussell Trust
- Edinburgh Clothing Store
- The Fuel Bank Foundation
- Turn 2 Us and the Edinburgh Trust

9. Looking ahead

Our long-term goal of eradicating poverty through accessible advice continues to shape our work and guide next year's plans. We are currently reviewing the accessibility of our service delivery methods and premises. As part of this, we're inviting feedback from clients via questionnaires, available online and at our reception. These insights will help us plan future services and ensure our support remains inclusive and responsive to the needs of our diverse community.

To further strengthen engagement with clients, community members, and sector partners, we'll launch a regular newsletter in 2025/2026. This new communication channel will showcase the work of our dedicated team, provide service updates, and highlight emerging issues that matter to those we support. We hope it becomes a trusted resource for clients and like-minded organisations committed to social justice, community wellbeing, and poverty eradication.

Next year also marks progress towards our re-accreditation under the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Provision. Preparation is already underway, including a full refresh of our organisational policies and procedures, and the ongoing collection of client consent to enable independent casework review. We view this not only as a compliance milestone, but as a chance to celebrate our achievements and identify opportunities to grow.

As an active contributor to citywide efforts, we will engage in the City of Edinburgh Council's consultation on sustainable funding models for the third sector and income maximisation services. These conversations are essential to building a more secure future for the communities we serve. Strengthening our financial resilience and diversifying funding sources will be key priorities in the coming year.

Finally, we remain deeply aware of the emotional complexities involved in delivering welfare, debt, and housing advice. Responding to sector-wide concerns raised in Money Advice Scotland's Wellbeing Index¹, we are committed to supporting the wellbeing of our team. Their compassion and resilience lie at the heart of our mission, and investing in their wellbeing is both an ethical responsibility and crucial to sustaining our long-term impact.

¹ Money Advice Scotland, *Wellbeing Index 2024/25* (2025), <https://www.moneyadvicescotland.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=67c4fecdddf91-4d0f-a99c-abb8c0b78c13>.

Contact Us

Office address:

Granton Information Centre
134 – 138 West Granton Road
Edinburgh
EH5 1PE

Opening hours:

Monday - Thursday: 09.30-12.30 & 13.30-16.00
Friday: 09.30-12.30 & 13.30-15.30

Phone number:

0131 551 2459 / 0131 552 0458

Email address:

info@gic.org.uk

Website:

www.gic.org.uk

Or follow us on

social media:

www.facebook.com/GrantonInfoCentre