



community law service northampton & county



Annual Achievements 2024-2025

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Our Mission

“To improve access to justice, particularly for those in our local community who are disadvantaged or facing hardship.”

We seek to deliver this by:

- ***Being accessible to all***
- ***Providing high quality advice***
- ***Educating people on their rights, to build future resilience***
- ***Upholding our independence***
- ***Directing people to self help where appropriate and providing end to end casework for those who need it.***

Our Values

Collaborate

- working in partnership with community focused groups improves services for our communities by them being more connected and reaching more people. It also improves efficiency and gives better value for money. We seek out and take up opportunities to collaborate.

Agile

- we know the needs of our community can change. We listen to our clients and colleagues to ensure we understand local need and strive to deliver services that meets that need.

Respectful

- we treat everyone with whom we engage with respect and without judgment.

Empowering

- we want people to be in control of their lives and be able to make informed decisions. We work to ensure people have the information to enable them to make the right decisions for them, to give them knowledge and resilience and to ensure they can live their best life.

Chief Executive's Report

This year has seen a welcome increase in community based work, taking our Services out into communities to improve access to advice, and encouraging early engagement with advice before matters escalate. Although we have continued to deliver around 95 advice appointments each week from our own offices, we have been delivering from 19 different community-based and partner venues across the county. It is hoped that this work will gradually reduce the complexity of cases and therefore be swifter and less complex to resolve for our clients through earlier intervention. Staff have attended many community events this year to help with engagement. We also know getting advice has a positive impact on health and wellbeing: 87% of clients said advice had helped improve their health or prevented it from deteriorating. We want to reach those facing hardship as soon as possible.

Work is ongoing to review our service delivery for health inclusion groups, making sure we are doing all we can to reach those groups in our community who experience health inequality. This is helpful in informing how we shape and deliver services.

We have continued our extensive collaborations with partners in the VCSE and statutory sector, either through direct project/service delivery or strategically, such as within the VCSE Assembly where we can identify and address trends affecting our community. We are very proud to work with so many wonderful groups who have their communities at the heart of what

they do.

We have formally agreed a Mission Statement and Organisational values, following wide consultation with our whole team. These provide clarity both internally and externally on how Community Law Service operates and its ethos. This year also saw the Charity become an accredited Real Living Wage employer.

We have also been working to increase capacity in the advice sector locally and thanks to new funding, now have a trainee immigration adviser in post and a trainee solicitor starting in April 2025.

In October, we were honoured to be awarded Charity of the Year at the NNBN awards – recognition of the wide impact of our work. The donation received enabled us to fund some wellbeing sessions for staff, who often work under exceptional pressure and to short deadlines, achieving great results for clients. The team continue to deliver high quality advice, and we successfully retained the LEXCEL quality mark, the Law Society's quality standard for specialist advice.

Please take a few moments to read through the achievements and work our team has undertaken this year. My thanks go to our Staff, Trustees and funders. As always I am proud to be part of this organisation and to work alongside such dedicated and knowledgeable colleagues.

Sarah Hayle Chief Executive June 2025



Our Performance

17259

People provided with advice and information

£8,806,053

Welfare benefit income claimed for local residents

£29,087,299

Debt managed on behalf of clients

1277

Court hearings attended in respect of housing repossession and eviction

109

Social Security Appeal Tribunals supported



43% of clients live in social housing

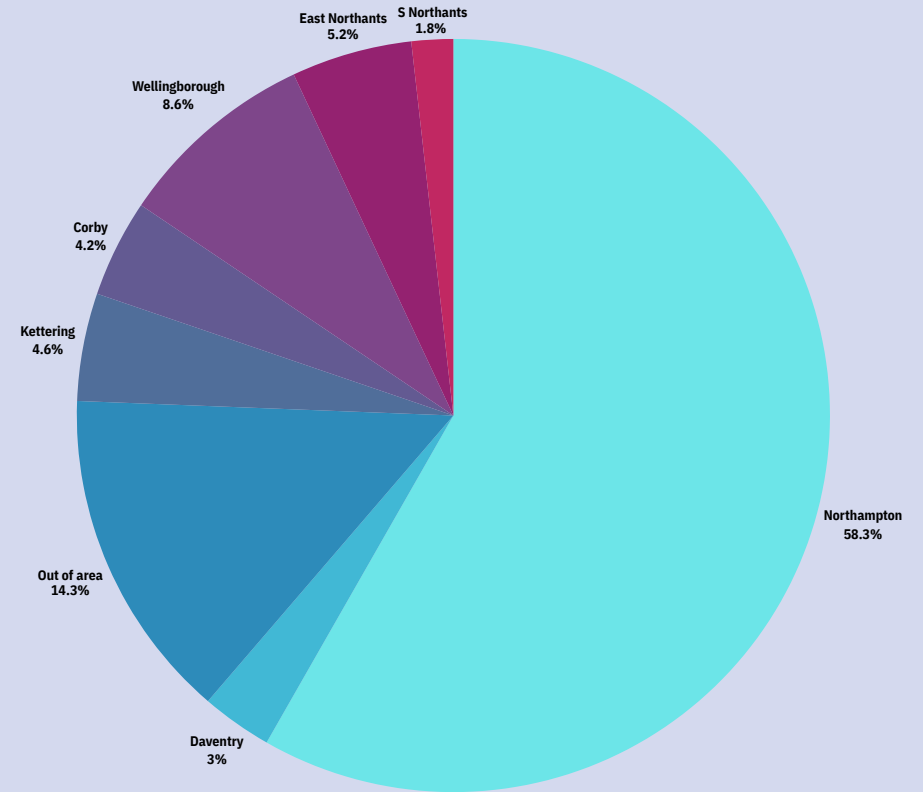


Gender of clients:

43% Male

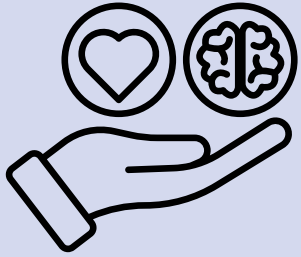
57% Female

Where clients lived



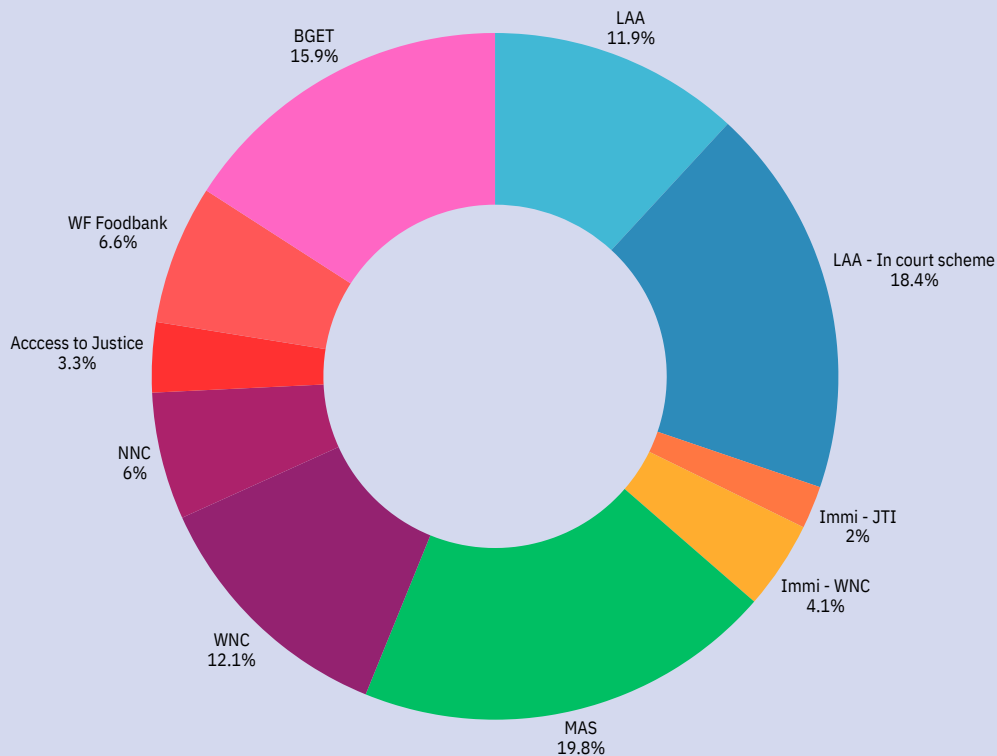
68% of clients have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out their normal day to day activities

Our Performance

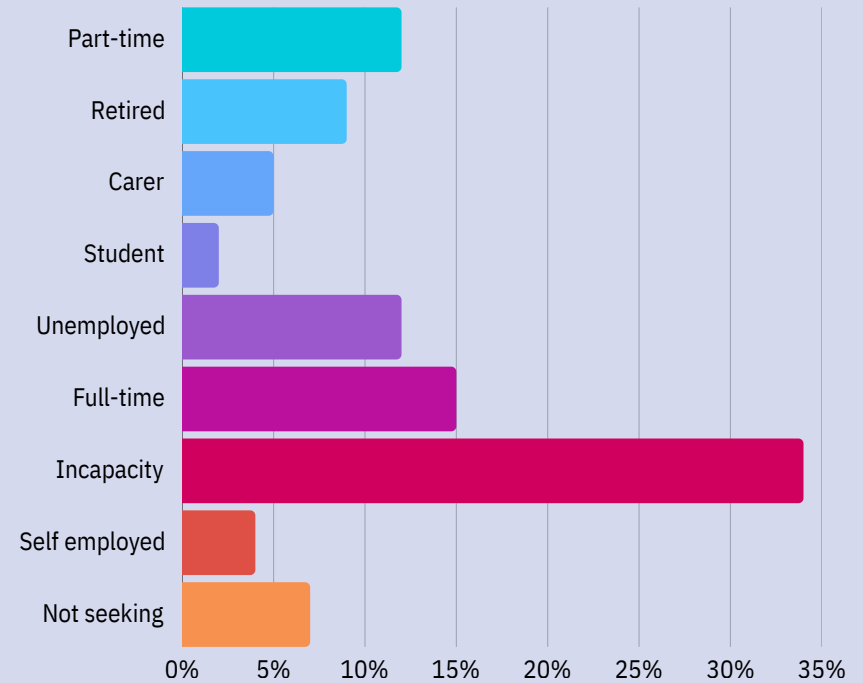


87% of clients said the assistance had helped improve their health or prevented it from deteriorating

Project Breakdown of 6284 clients provided with specialist advice



Employment status of clients



Clients were referred / signposted to us from 94 separate organisations

Debt Team

Debt advice has continued to be in high demand with clients often presenting with high levels of priority debt. Wait times have eased thankfully since last year so clients are not having to wait several weeks for a first appointment, and this has also significantly improved the rate of client attendance at appointments. The latter is especially important as not only does a missed appointment waste resources, but the client's issue probably still needs to be resolved so they will need help again in the future and issues may have escalated in the meantime.

DROs continue to be the most common form of insolvency carried out by CLS, with the number of bankruptcies continuing to fall due to the DRO criteria being expanded. Clients continue to benefit from DROs not attracting a fee, which has helped make them more accessible for those in financial difficulty who qualify.

We are starting to see more homeowners seek advice and more clients presenting with mortgage arrears, suggesting that the increase in interest rates is starting to have more of an effect as more borrowers come to the end of their fixed rate deals.

£4,435,352 of debt was written off

We have also seen an increase in clients facing the repossession of a hire purchase vehicle where they need to retain the vehicle for essential work or family purposes. This leads to court action and many of the agreements we see are high interest, reflecting the challenges some of our clients face when attempting to obtain credit and ultimately costing them more.

We continue to see high levels of clients presenting with deficit budgets. This can make the client's debts very difficult to manage, as they cannot afford to maintain their ongoing priority essential expenditure. This makes repayment arrangements almost impossible, and means that if the client elects to clear their debt in insolvency, they are at risk of falling into financial difficulties and debt with their ongoing bills.

Creditor communication has improved somewhat especially with regards to utility companies. British Gas in particular have been excellent in reaching out to our advisors and giving them direct contact details for the necessary teams, meaning we can get in touch and resolve the client's issue much faster. There remains however poor communication from large parts of the credit sector and even from debt collection firms. Courts have remained very slow which has delayed our ability to process DRO applications, as often we need information on outstanding judgements which we can only get from the courts.

234 Debt Relief Orders Administered

Mr A approached our drop-in service at the Guildhall with a hire purchase agreement in arrears, on his vehicle which he needed for work. He lived with his partner and two dependent children in privately rented accommodation. He worked full time and his partner worked part time.

The lender had issued an application for a return of goods at the county court with a court hearing scheduled.

Help provided:

The client felt he could afford to pay the hire purchase debt on a monthly basis, and wished to make a proposal to the creditor. As the court hearing was in a few days time, CLS submitted Mr A into the Insolvency Service's Debt Respite Scheme and then attended court with the client. The Judge agreed to adjourn the case until the end of the 60 days statutory period under the Scheme.

The client then had a scheduled appointment with one of the CLS debt advisors where we worked out a full income and expenditure financial statement for the client. It was confirmed that he could afford to clear the full outstanding balance over the remaining term of the agreement.

This proposal was then made to the creditor who agreed to a suspended return of goods order on terms in line with the client's proposal.

We then attended court with the client at the rescheduled hearing and ensured that the suspension of the order was recorded on the court file. The client was able to keep the vehicle, which was essential for him, and repay what he owed on an affordable basis.

Your Service was outstanding and professional. I would not have been able to do it all myself

Welfare Benefits Team

Demand for Specialist advice has continued to increase throughout 2024/25. Advice and casework from our highly experienced, dedicated team of advisors has resulted in significant Welfare Benefit income gains for residents within Northamptonshire.

Delivery of advice has proved challenging despite stable funding provision, with increased wait times for appointments.

The sheer level of demand led to a brief halt on acceptance of some Benefit referrals in order to maintain high standards of advice. It is vital to prioritise ongoing clients, focus on those most in need and meet deadlines for challenges, whilst also considering the wellbeing of staff working under immense pressure and we continue to review this at regular intervals.

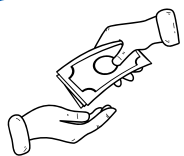
Welfare Benefits remains a highly sought after and complex area of advice, but funding opportunities are lacking, restricting what CLS can deliver. Our partnership work with Food Banks/Larders, other VCSE colleagues and attendance at Community events has been pro-active in ensuring early access to advice to many who otherwise struggle to ask for help. This year is the first year post-COVID that a real return to community based work has been achieved; an essential way to reach those most in need and one which we have

always strongly supported. Personal Independence Payment made up 16.8% of enquiries, with advice sought on first applications, award reviews and challenges to decisions, often after lengthy waits for assessments. Escalation of the Universal Credit managed migration roll-out has created an increase in enquiries (16.7%), mainly due to concerns with moving from long standing legacy benefits and loss of benefit income, despite a right to Transitional Protection. Council Tax was the third highest area at 15.9% Advice around the Work assessment in both Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit remains in high demand.

We continued to see persistent issues on incorrect decisions and payment of benefits ; and delays in response to enquiries and disputes by DWP and Local Authorities. The majority of clients we work with have mental, cognitive, or physical vulnerability and for some - all apply. Many also struggle due to digital exclusion, finding disability benefit applications and negotiating the system for complaints and disputes extremely challenging. As a result, our Advisors continue to carry high caseloads, due to dealing with complex and multiple matters along with the lengthy timescales involved in benefit disputes.

Nonetheless, the team continue to provide an essential service to communities within Northamptonshire, ensuring access to justice, correct entitlements are in payment and maximisation of benefit income to those most in need.

**515 people received
Welfare Benefits casework**



**£100,115 of grants were
obtained for clients**

'It has had such a positive impact on my life. It really took a lot of stress off me in terms of managing and paying for things'

Client's Situation:

Client sought advice for a full benefit check, following a change in circumstances.

Lone parent of 2 young children, living in temporary accommodation and unable to work, due caring responsibilities for a disabled child. Receiving Universal Credit, Child Benefit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

Although attending mainstream school, 1 child had an EHCP in place and received higher rate Care and lower rate Mobility components of Child Disability Living Allowance.

Summary of Work Completed:

CLS identified the Universal Credit amount was incorrect and advised Client on how UC payments were calculated and they were missing out on additional elements of the Disabled Child element at the higher rate, as the higher rate Care component of Child DLA was in payment. Also, a missing Carer element, which could be included as the child was in receipt of a qualifying benefit, ie - Child DLA Care component at either middle or high rate.

Client was assisted in adding a UC journal entry requesting their award to be looked at again with inclusion of the Disabled Child element and the Carers element, including a backdate to May '23, in line with the start date of the Child DLA award. Client was advised that when entitled to Benefit at a higher rate because claimant, or someone included in claim is awarded a qualifying Benefit, even if the qualifying Benefit was awarded some time ago, supersession takes effect on the date of entitlement to the qualifying Benefit. Client was also reminded of their duty to advise of any change in circumstances to all relevant Benefits offices immediately known.

Unfortunately, undue delay in Universal Credit applying the additional elements to the claimants' award required further intervention from CLS citing legislation. Universal Credit subsequently applied the additional elements and backdated accordingly, providing a savings "pot" for the very first time and allowing monies for much needed essentials for client and children.

Client was assisted with the Priority Service Registers, due to vulnerability within the household.

Client received advice on home energy saving methods, which were easily implemented for the household and provided with free energy saving light bulbs and radiator foils.

Outcomes Achieved:

Income maximised by £685.89 per month.

Arrears of benefit received @ £6427.50.

Priority Service Register confirmation received.

Client was shocked and grateful at the outcomes, having struggled to cope with the additional needs of a disabled child and overall high cost of living. No longer feared how they would cope with increasing energy needs and winter approaching or making difficult choices of further cut backs, when already "cut to the bone".

'My mental health was poor but the advice helped me get through a difficult situation. My situation is now very positive'

Immigration Team

In August 2024, we employed a new part time Immigration Trainee within our team. They are training with us to pass their Level 1 IAA so that can give immigration advice a well needed boost in our area where demand is always high.

We continue to see as many clients as we can at our One Stop Shop at The Guildhall every Monday for our free duty advice, which is now by appointment only due to unprecedented demand. This continues to be popular and we always reach full capacity for these sessions. We have seen a steady flow of new clients throughout the year and many previous clients are coming back to us for further assistance to ensure their continuity of residency for later applications for extended or permanent settlement. We assist a lot of clients with applications for their family to join them in the country and continue to assist them all the way through until they are able to obtain British nationality. This is a very long and costly journey for some clients but quicker for others.

Our clients continue to struggle with the rising costs of the Home Office fees. However, for those of our clients who are struggling to meet these rising fees we can assist them with fee waiver applications, where eligible, so that they are able to continue with their Immigration route to settlement.

'I am now a British Citizen. I have peace of mind in my home and my life'

We continue with our secure funding from the Justice Together Initiative (JTI) to be able to offer more free advice and casework for the next year (3 years in total) but it is very likely to be extended by another 3 years. The JTI objective is to improve access to justice fairly and equally and to enable people to move on with their lives. Part of this funding has brought about the creation of the East Midland Immigration Network, building a community of people and organisations in the East Midlands, to get the help where it is needed. We are delighted to be a part of this project which will see an increase of people being assisted where it is needed.

Further funding from West Northamptonshire Council has been awarded to us to assist clients within their area. This funding has been given for 2 years and we are now entering our second year of support for local residents. We can see clients, under this funding for advice and assistance on any immigration related matter. Assisting local residents obtain secure immigration status has a positive impact on their lives and enables them to fully participate in their communities and be an active contributor to the local economy.



Immigration clients in 2024/25 were of 70 different nationalities

Ms Z sought advice for an application for Domestic Violence from her partner. She was living in the country on a spouse visa and had to leave her home because of violence, both physical and mental, and was living in a refuge. We represented her and helped her to apply for permanent settlement. Extensive research and evidence gathering from various sources to include the police, family lawyers, medical reports, Refuge and corresponding with MARAC and social services, preparing statements from independent witnesses and a full and detailed statement from Ms Z. The evidence gathering was a crucial part of the application's success.

Help Provided:

- We assessed her immigration history and the visa that she was in the country on as this was critical for a successful application.
- The Advisor made detailed and lengthy representations to support the application under the Domestic Violence rules to include evidence from the above agencies. All of these documents were to prove the sustained abuse that Ms Z had to suffer and had to be set out in detail for consideration by the Home Office.
- The Home Office considered the application and decided to issue Ms Z with Indefinite Leave to Remain and she is now settled and able to continue with her life free of violence.
- Ensuring that Ms Z is supported within the community and she herself is able to deal with and access her eVisa account.

**'I can now confidently live
and work in the UK. I am
happy and settled'**

**357 people
received
advice**

Fuel Poverty Team

With continued high energy costs and high cost of living, it's been another difficult year for low income households. Many have at times been faced with the impossible decision between eating and heating. Our fuel poverty and energy advice has been significantly funded by West Northamptonshire Council, enabling a much welcome West Northamptonshire Energy Advice Service provision to local residents, working closely with Care & Repair, to deliver holistic support with advice and practical in-home measures to those experiencing fuel poverty. This funding also has a valuable Emergency Fund, enabling the provision of larger measures to improve home warmth such as boiler repair or replacement.

Further to this, we received a new 2 year grant from the British Gas Energy Trust, in order to provide money and energy advice focused on specific areas of high need throughout Northampton and Wellingborough. Funding from the British Gas Energy Trust is now in it's 10th year, for this we are very grateful. Both of these grants put us in a robust position for specialist casework delivery from our experienced team.

Income maximisation has been integral in this work and enables clients to maximise income and better afford energy bills and the general cost of living. We provide important energy efficiency advice to educate on usage and bring sustainable behaviour change. The team also resolve billing issues and identify the need for small energy saving devices (many of which we have been able to provide free of charge).

1477 people received holistic fuel poverty advice

Energy providers are frequently guilty of taking too long to resolve issues raised for their customers around usage and billing. Poor communication and complaints closure without resolution all have to be addressed. Our recent development with British Gas has been welcomed, affording us access to a dedicated team to contact and work with to address issues affecting the most vulnerable clients.

For some pensioner households, the decision to stop the Winter Fuel Payment (WFP) was a significant blow, preventing some from maintaining a warm home and meeting energy payments. There can be a very fine line between those who qualify for Pension Credit to provide entitlement to the WFP, and those whose income just exceed PC income level. The subsequent flurry to claim Pension Credit, and within the September 2024 deadline to also qualify for the WFP for Winter 24-25, then led to a high volume of claims and backlog of processing with no guarantee of entitlement. We continue to advise anyone struggling to afford their essential energy costs and are pleased to have been able to issue emergency fuel vouchers to the value of £34,380 to help those in a crisis situation and then continue to provide advice and assistance to resolve the longer term issues.

'The advice helped me day to day, helped my finances and prevented my health from getting worse'



Client Situation:

Client accessed the Service as struggling financially, due to low income and extremely concerned on how to manage unexpected expenditures. Also concerned due to an outstanding balance of £1,429.16 on their British Gas energy account, plus an outstanding amount of approximately £1,300 with Anglian Water. Client was already in the process of paying off a TV license fine.

They could not afford food for the week and their fridge-freezer and cooker recently stopped working and beyond repair, with no possibility of replacement due to low benefit income. This meant daily reliance upon local churches and food banks, for basic food and essential needs, and no cold storage or cooking facilities.

Client had a smart meter and so billed based on accurate readings, with a payment arrangement of £50 per month. The low payments were not covering ongoing usage, however, it was unaffordable for the client to increase the amount, due to restricted income.

Client was single and living alone in social housing. Income consisted of an award of Universal Credit as a job seeker, plus help with Housing paid direct to the Landlord with a deduction for a UC Advance payment for 5 months further. Maximum Council Tax Reduction was in payment, with client meet their contribution liability, in order to prevent Council Tax arrears, Enforcement Agent action and charges (as previously experienced). The property was double glazed, insulated, good boiler with fully working central heating system, and advised as being well maintained by the Landlord.

Client attended an appointment under BGET funding. Although Client had believed themselves to be on the Anglian Water's Extra Lite Tariff, this was not so, hence assisted client in applying for an Extra Care Assessment, which offered an affordable payment of £8 per month.

Discussed, completed and submitted application for a cooker under BGET White Goods Scheme.

Discussed and ordered the client a fridge-freezer under BGET Extra Assistance Portal.

Discussed, completed and submitted a BGET Energy Trust Fund application with view to clear the outstanding balance. Client continued to make payments towards their British Gas account while the application was in process.

Discussed energy saving behaviour changes and issued client with an Air Fryer and £100 One Link Energy Voucher, under Household Support Fund Scheme (6). Provided free radiator foils and energy saving bulbs, saving both energy and money over the years, plus energy saving leaflet with useful home energy saving tips. Signposted client to a local budgeting workshop and advised on accessing local Food Larders weekly, as best way of stretching low income and helping prevent food waste.

Outcomes Achieved:

£1429.16 debt cleared in full by BGET Energy Trust Fund. This prevented further recovery proceedings and charges. Client now understands the importance of budgeting and making correct adjustments of payments to meet usage. £100 One-Off Fuel Voucher provided credit for energy accounts, following energy debt clearance. Airfryer helped save energy, provided quick and healthy meal options, plus less washing up!

Saving of £31 per month on Anglian Water payments. Successful BGET White Goods Scheme & Extra Assistance Portal Grant applications, resulting in delivery and installation of a new fridge-freezer and cooker.

In 5 months, the UC Advance payment will have been re-paid and client planned to use this towards building a credit on the energy accounts, helping prevent debt accruing again during the winter months. Less reliance upon food banks, using food larders instead.

Client advised "The advice and help provided was so much more than expected, I'm really grateful. Feel I'm now able to relax a little, focus more on my job search and stop worrying so much, thank you so much."

Housing



The housing department has had a very busy year. This is compounded by people often not contacting us until very late in the process, not allowing us enough time to do the work that is necessary to save their homes. We have clients with warrants for eviction that only contact us a day or two before the warrant is due to be executed and this is a drain on our resources with three or more members of the housing team working together to save a client's home.

We have a success rate of 98% in saving all warrants and having them suspended. However, we are very focused on work to bring people to us as soon as they become aware of a warrant. This work is ongoing.

The housing team work very closely with social housing providers and the local councils to make sure that there is a smooth referral process, whereby clients who are in need of advice and would like to defend possession proceedings are referred to us at the earliest opportunity. During the period of April 2024/25, we have found that there is a 30% increase in homelessness decisions in comparison to last year, we see increasingly harsh decisions of intentionally homeless or where a homelessness duty is not accepted.

The Housing team has successfully managed to overturn 80% of these decisions in all the cases conducted during this period.

Section 21 notice possession claims have remained the same as last year, there has been no significant increase or change from the previous period. We are finding that Landlords are still worried about the Renters Reform Bill coming into force and they are still taking action to evict tenants to get their property back or to be sold which are the two main reasons for issuing proceedings.

There is a significant increase in rent arrears possession cases, with social landlords who are issuing about 20% more NOSP than last year and the main reason for this is the migration from ESA to Universal Credit, whereby clients who were in receipt of Housing Benefit are now being put on Universal Credit which has led to a gap in housing costs not being paid and the client has found themselves in arrears, through no fault of their own and this has led to a need for more Discretionary Housing Payment applications. This work is done under the fairly new Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service (HLPAS), this work has helped save so many cases progressing to a possession hearing and of real value.

The HLPAS scheme has allowed CLS to save 40% of cases progressing to a possession hearing, but addressing the issues which are threatening the possession claim, such as a problem with benefits or unmanaged debt making budgeting difficult.

On the Court Duty Scheme we are finding that there is a significant increase in mortgage cases and social housing possession cases, the increase is about 30% compared to last year and we are finding that more and more people are coming to the end of term on their mortgage with no means to make the final capital repayment; as consequence they are facing 56 day possession orders. For some, the interest rates increasing is forcing clients into arrears with their only option to sell their properties as they simply cannot afford to keep them.

The court is working with CLS to allow clients enough time to put their properties on the market and secure a sale; we have managed to help clients avert possession and eviction so that they are able to sell the property on their own terms and not become homeless.

Over £16m of housing debt was handled by the housing team

The client was a mother of 5 children aged: 16,14 ,12, 4 and a 3-year-old. The older three children were from a previous partner and the two younger ones were from the partner that she was living with. There had been domestic violence in this relationship since 2021 and she had police involvement several times for domestic abuse. In February 2024, the situation came to a head when the client's partner called the police and told them that she had stabbed him, she was drunk as she has an alcohol addiction problem; all entirely fictitious.

The police arrested her and took her in custody and she was initially charged with GBH, but following Police enquiries, all charges were dropped.

The client felt unable to return to the property or her partner; she and her children were homeless. She made an application for housing with the council, the council based their decision to discharge their main duty on the GBH allegations. The decision was that as she has been charged with GBH, and this incident lead to her becoming homeless, she had made herself intentionally homeless.

The council was given objective evidence regarding the ex-partner's behaviour and abuse, unfortunately this was totally disregarded and the client was being held accountable: she and the children were deemed to have made themselves intentionally homeless. The temporary accommodation that the family had been given was due to be taken away and the client was going to be made homeless. The only solution offered to her at the time was for her to allow social services to take her children and for her to be street homeless.

Request for Review

Community Law Service submitted a request for a review of the council's decision under S202 of the Housing Act 1996.

Medical evidence relating to the children's condition as well as the abuse experienced by the client was submitted. Further investigations were made to confirm that the CPS was not bringing charges, a further, that the only crime related to false allegations of stabbings from the ex-partner.

Full submissions, supported by evidence, were made to the council with supporting case law and outlining merits for a judicial review of the process on the grounds that the council decision was grossly unfair and unjust. The council were asked to allow the family to remain in the temporary accommodation whilst this review was determined under the Human rights Act, as it would be a breach of Article 8, if the family was broken up and the children were put into the care system.

Outcome of case

The council overturned their 'intentionally homeless' decision, they allowed the family to remain in the temporary accommodation and they accepted the relief duty to find suitable accommodation for them. The children remained living with their mother who was then supported by the council.

Financial Summary

In 2024/25 we had an income of £1,358,839, a 14.5% increase from the previous year. £104,769 of this was funding paid to partners we have collaborated with on services. Expenditure was £1,255,225 (up just over 13.5%). The highest single expenditure remained as staff costs (£883,072) but increasing overheads and running costs, have had an unavoidable impact on costs this year (33% increase); this and the pending increase in employer National Insurance will continue to bring increased running costs into 2025/26.

We remain very grateful for the long term funding from The Money and Pensions Service, The British Gas Energy Trust and the Legal Aid Agency. We were particularly grateful to the British Gas Energy Trust who have entered their 10th year of support to CLS.

Funding for training posts have been secured to the value of £72,000. This is really important funding to help build capacity at a time when the advice sector is in such need of advisers.

Housing Legal Aid has generated income of £176,950, a 12.7% increase from last year. This reflects the continued increase in demand for housing advice. The fact that this is paid per case gives flexibility to meet demand, as we can continue to deliver the level of advice needed to meet demand (staff resources allowing of course).

AB Charitable Trust have also awarded a £30,000 unrestricted grant to CLS which gives capacity to engage with networks and fund essential areas such as staff development and supervision, for which funding can be hard to find.

This year Advice grants have been secured from both unitary councils to the value of £112,500 which is most welcome. We are also grateful to our new funder, The Henry Smith Charity who have awarded a grant of £41,500 for benefit advice work.

Special thanks to our funders and supporters

The Money and Pensions Service	Weston Favell Foodbank and The Trussell Trust
British Gas Energy Trust	Northamptonshire Carers Association
The Legal Aid Agency	The Henry Smith Charity
The Institute of Money Advisers	Northamptonshire Community Foundation
West Northamptonshire Council	AB Charitable Trust
North Northamptonshire Council	The Access to Justice Foundation
Northampton Town Council	West Northants Social Enterprise Town
The Hope Centre	
Justice Together Initiative	

Community Law Service is grateful to have ongoing support from many funders. Our sincere thanks go to all of our funders and supporters.

We are also very grateful for the £4,143 in donations received this year.

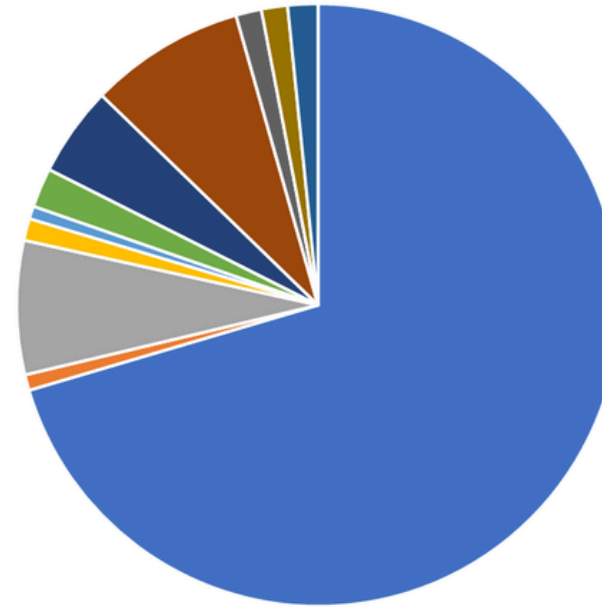
Donations are accepted through our Justgiving page via our website. Gift-Aiding increases the value of donations.

<https://www.communitylawservice.org.uk/>

How we spent our funds

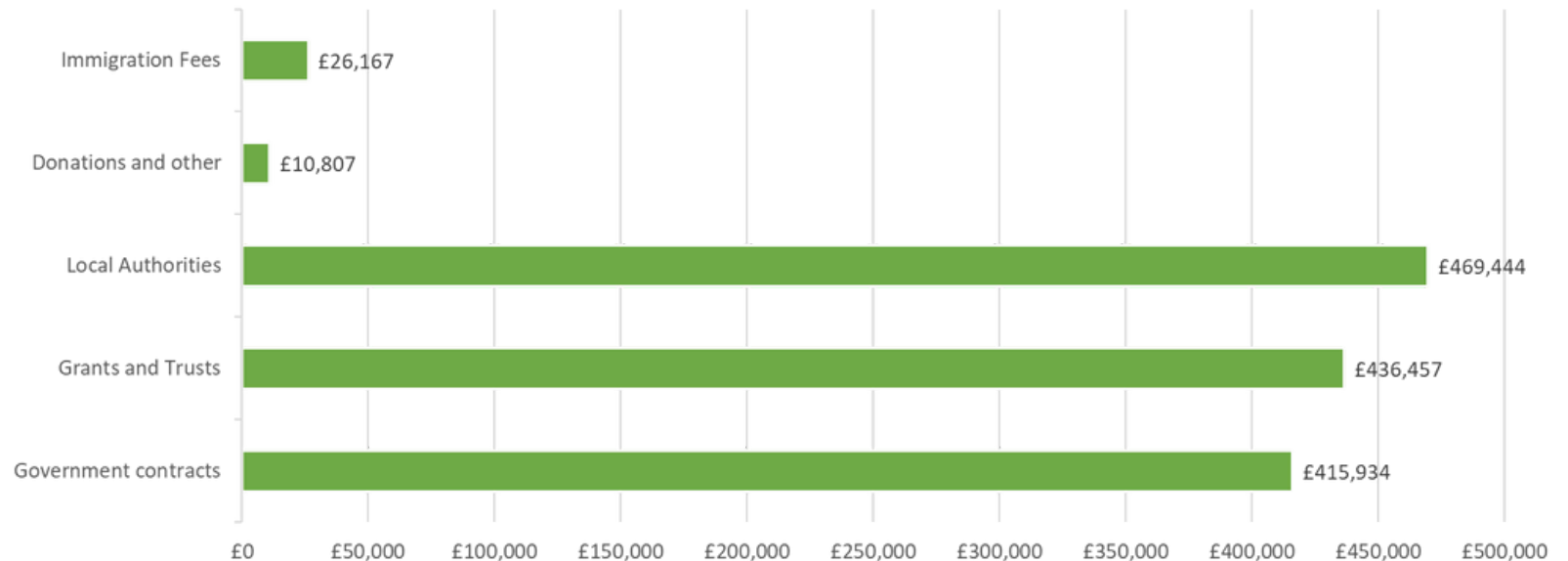
- Staff salaries and payroll 70%
- Staff travel and parking 1%
- Premises costs and insurance 7%
- Training, Subscriptions and books 1%
- Audit, accountancy, accreditation 1%
- IT/Connectivity 2%
- Emergency vouchers and energy fund 5%
- Paid to Partners 8%
- Office equipment 1%
- Non recoverable VAT 1%
- Other 2%

Expenditure



**Total Income
2024/2025
£1,358,839**

Income 2024/25



Client Feedback

Feedback

All clients receive a client feedback form. In addition feedback forms an important part of our reports to funders and a sample of clients are contacted directly each quarter. We have also have an electronic form which clients receive a link to in their closing letter.

100% of clients have rated the Service they received as excellent or very good

97% rated their adviser's knowledge as excellent.

Complaints

We have received 5 complaints this year. All have been resolved via our internal complaints system: 1 was upheld in part around their experience of accessing CLS, with changes made to our processes; 1 had confused us with a company in Birmingham unrelated to us and 3 were investigated and responded to, but not upheld.

Google Reviews

This year we received 8 reviews - reviews highlighted our knowledge, empathy and recommended us to others.

Gift and donations

A huge thank you to all that have donated to Community Law Service over the last year.

We once again received a number of 'Thank You' cards and gifts, including chocolates and flowers.

Thank you to all that have donated financially or sent cards, it is really appreciated by all the staff, volunteers and trustees.

'I finally have my new home and the stress of becoming homeless is over'

'You sorted out the court letter and all the other debt issues. It has had a positive impact on the client's stress levels and heart'

' From introduction the advisor's vast knowledge of the benefits system was obvious'

'Without the Service and the advisor's knowledge I'm not sure the outcome would have been favourable or fair. The Service is of the greatest importance to fair Court hearings'

'You have truly changed mine and my daughter's lives forever'



community law service northampton & county

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